CHRIST'S KINGDOM And REIGN

H. M. RIGGLE

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Christ's Kingdom and Reign

BY

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WHAT CONSTITUTES A KINGDOM?

The essentials to the complete establishment and existence of a kingdom are five in number: (1) A king as the ruling head; (2) A throne from which he issues his decrees; (3) Territory over which he has jurisdiction; (4) Subjects in that territory to rule over; and (5) Laws to govern the subjects. All these are found in the temporal kingdoms of the world. We must, then, look for these essentials in the kingdom of heaven. If in the economy of divine grace—the revealed plan of redemption—and in the future glories of the eternal world, these essentials exist, then we have, here and hereafter, the everlasting kingdom of God. In the language of Dr. Adam Clark, "The kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory form the endless government of Christ."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are found more than one hundred times in the New Testament. We also have "the kingdom of Christ" and "the kingdom of God's dear Son." All these refer either to the dispensation of divine grace here or to the fu-

ture state of the redeemed in the eternal world. The dispensation of the gospel, the dispensation of infinite mercy, and the manifestation of eternal truth by Christ Jesus, is called the kingdom of heaven. Its ruling head is the Sovereign of heaven and earth; its laws, all the moral precepts of the gospel; its subjects, all who believe in Jesus (Christ never saved a soul he did not govern.); its territory and field of operation, the whole world.

The ministry of John, the forerunner of Christ, was "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). His first announcement to the people was: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Christ began his Galilean ministry "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). Thus we see that the door into the kingdom of grace and salvation was opened by Christ during his personal ministry. In Luke 16:16 it is recorded that people entered the kingdom from John's time on, for "the law and the prophets were until John: since that time, the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

Jesus taught that the unconverted must seek to enter the kingdom. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." Of the Jews who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

All these texts clearly show that the terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven," are used interchangeably and applied directly to the dispensation of full salvation, ushered in by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is called the kingdom of heaven because God designed that his kingdom of grace here should resemble the kingdom of glory above. We are taught to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," that is, it does not consist in the gratification of sensual passions, natural appetites, or worldly ambitions, but it is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The glories of heaven will consist of righteousness without any mixture of sin, peace without strife or contention, and joy in the Holy Ghost—spiritual joy, without a mixture of misery. These, by the grace of God, are to be enjoyed right here on earth. The very elements of heaven itself are possessed and realized in actual experience by all those who are washed in the blood of Christ. In the language of the poet,

"We go not to heaven, salvation to know,
But Jesus came down to make whiter than snow."

Therefore we see how appropriately the term, "the kingdom of heaven," is applied to the great work of salvation.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM PRESENT

We have already seen what the essentials to the complete establishment and existence of a kingdom are. The question now is, Are we to look for these in a future age, or do we have

them in the present dispensation of divine grace?

Millennialists contend that we do not now have these essentials to the kingdom of God, but that we shall have them in an age to follow the present. In the name of the God of the Bible, we affirm that we now have, in this last and best dispensation, every essential to the perfect establishment and existence of a kingdom.

A KING AS THE RULING HEAD

Christ is king throughout the present dispensation. He was not made a king by some legislative act, but he was *born* a king. When the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, they inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" When Jesus stood before Pilate, he said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18: 36, 37). Here Christ acknowledged that he had a kingdom. He terms it "my kingdom." Pilate at once asked, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus

answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." This is equivalent to: "It is true that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world."

He came to set up and to maintain a spiritual government, and this government is established in and by the truth. All who love the truth will hear his voice and attend to the spiritual doctrine he preaches. Nathaniel, who was "an Israelite indeed," and free from guile, addressed Jesus thus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1: 49); and Christ did not reprove Nathaniel for speaking thus.

At the time of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19: 37, 38). And "much people that were come to the feast . . . went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King

cometh, sitting on an ass's colt" (John 12: 12-15).

From these texts we learn two things: First, that Christ, even during his personal ministry, had a kingdom; second, that he was then reigning as king and was acknowledged as such by the multitude of his disciples. They were not mistaken in this, for the inspired writer informs us that "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (Matt. 21: 4, 5). Thus it is an established fact that Christ Jesus is King. And if he is king he must have a kingdom, for a king presupposes a kingdom.

The evangelistic prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the Messiah and his office and work in these words: "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Isa. 33: 22). From this it is seen that at the very time Jesus Christ was to be king, he would save his people. In that day the apostle said: "Behold *now* is the day of salvation." Therefore Christ was, and is now, king. In Rev. 17: 14 it is written: "The Lamb

shall overcome them: he is Lord of lords, and King of kings."

There is a sense in which Satan robbed man of the first dominion, and usurped the place of king, or prince, of this world. Jesus himself called him "the prince of this world." For four thousand long years he held the human family under the dominion and power of sin and death; hence, death reigned from Adam until Christ. But Messiah came to dethrone the devil and to set up his everlasting kingdom of righteousness instead. Before people are saved, they allow Satan to rule in their lives; to make his throne in their very hearts; and when Satan is enthroned there, he holds the reins and rules the man. This accounts for all the unrest, discord, anarchy, jealousy, envy, murder, and, in fact, all the wickedness that abounds in the individual life, the home life, the community, the state, the nation, and the world. The law was given to restrain wickedness, until Christ should come. Satan must be cast out; not out of heaven nor out of the world, as some assert, but out of his place of rule in the human heart.

Jesus illustrated his mission thus: "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When

a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." The strong man who keeps the palace refers to the devil. The stronger than he, who casts him out, is Christ. And in fulfilment he said, "Now is the prince of this world cast out." Through Christ's death, he destroyed "him that had power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Thus by means of his own death, which made an atonement for sin and procured the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, he rendered useless and ineffectual all the operations of him who had the power, or influence, to bring death into the world by sin; that is, the devil. Christ, by his death on the cross and his triumphant resurrection from the grave, became vested with all power in heaven and in earth. He broke the bands of death asunder, he destroyed the victory of the grave, and extracted the sting of death itself, thus purchasing full salvation from all sin.

Peter says: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Savior, for to give repentance

to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5: 30, 31). Christ is called "the prince of life" (Acts 3: 15). Hear him: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Mark well the fact that Christ is now a prince—was raised from the dead a prince. A "prince is the one of highest rank; a sovereign; a monarch."—*Webster.* Thus when we speak of the princes of the world we include emperors and kings. This is why the Revelator was bold to affirm that Jesus Christ is "the prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1: 5). Just forty days after the resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of the Father, "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2: 9). Thus he was "by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2: 33). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

The reader will note that this took place when Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. "Which he wrought in Christ, *when he raised him from the dead*, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to

come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:20-22). This is decisive. Christ is now king and ruling head, supreme over all, the sovereign of both heaven and earth. "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:14, 15). He is king not merely in name, but in fact. As soon as he took his seat at the right hand of the Father, Paul declares that he was "*crowned* with glory and honor." In the Revelation Christ's kingdom is brought to view under the figure of a white horse and its rider. "I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2).

The uniform testimony of all the foregoing texts proves conclusively that not in a future age, but when God raised Christ from the dead, he "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, . . . and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church." What could be clearer? We here have the first essential to the establishment

and existence of a kingdom—Christ, sovereign and king over all heaven and earth; the ruling head of his church.

A THRONE FROM WHICH THE KING ISSUES HIS DECREES

"And of the angels he saith; Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom" (Heb. 1:7, 8). The term "throne" means a seat occupied by one having power or authority; a place identified with power and grandeur; sovereign power or dignity; an elevated position; an exalted state. When Christ ascended into heaven, his Father exalted him and gave to him his throne. Christ says: "I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). From this lofty throne in the heavens, Christ now executes, through the agencies of the Holy Spirit, his word, and his church, the great salvation he purchased upon the cross. From this throne he issues his decrees and rules throughout all the universe.

"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." It is in both worlds and extends over all time

and eternity. "All power is given unto me," said Christ, "both in heaven and in earth." His throne and dominion extend to the consummation of all things. Christ has the same glory, unlimited power, and authority that he had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5).

"A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." Scepter means an emblem, or badge, of authority; the appropriate ensign of royalty. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness. In this world righteousness exalts the individual, the community, the nation. It is that which exalts the untold millions to the high dignity and glories of heaven itself.

Christ's throne is called a "throne of grace," to which we are invited to come—"Come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Here again we have positive proof that Christ's kingdom is present. This is not spoken to people in some future age or time, but to us in this dispensation of mercy and salvation. Let *us* therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that *we* may obtain mercy.

(1) There is now a throne of grace, a propitiatory, the place where God and man are to

meet; (2) This is sprinkled with the atoning blood of Christ, who taketh away the sin of the world; (3) All men are invited to come to this throne by faith, and obtain mercy and grace —salvation; hence Christ's throne is present.

From this lofty throne in heaven Christ issues the decrees of his kingdom. And not only does he reign in person in the heavens above, he is also enthroned in the hearts of his children. In a spiritual sense his throne of holiness is established in our hearts, and he reigns in the lives of his people.

A TERRITORY OVER WHICH HE HAS JURISDICTION

Open your Bible to Matt. 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Through his death and resurrection he became invested with all power, not only in this world but also in heaven above. In the untold ages of the past God said to his Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psa. 2:7, 8). "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Since he has been exalted above all principality, powers,

might, and dominion, "all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:6), as well as all the myriads of redeemed souls in Paradise (see Rev. 5:9-13).

His territory covers all heaven and earth. The gospel message is to all nations in all the world, and this gospel is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Christ not only rules throughout his church on earth, but in a general sense he even rules in the kingdoms of men and governs the nations. He is the sovereign over all kings, magistrates, and governors.

SUBJECTS IN THIS TERRITORY TO RULE OVER

"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22). This text is conclusive proof that Christ is now king over all heaven. And of his church on earth it is said: "The church is subject unto Christ" (Eph. 5:24). So Christ has subjects in this dispensation, both in heaven and in earth. Wherever the gospel is preached in all the world, there will be found disciples of the Lord Jesus, and wherever those disciples are found, praise,

honor, and glory will be given to Christ Jesus, their Redeemer.

LAWS TO GOVERN THE SUBJECTS

One universal law governs all heaven and earth. This is the law of love to God and fellow creatures. This is expressed in these two principles, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." These principles have existed from all eternity past, and will exist to all eternity future. Upon these principles the Mosaic law rested; but when the fulness of time came "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1, 2).

The gospel is an expression of the principles of that higher law. It is this law of love to God and fellow creatures that governs all heaven, and this same law is revealed and expressed in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the standard of government and rule in the church of God now in this dispensation.

Instead of looking forward to a supposed Millennial age, in which the kingdom of heaven will

be established upon earth, the Scriptures clearly show that this kingdom is already come, and we who are saved are actually living therein. "He hath delivered us from the power of darkness; and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13).

NATURE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

The idea that the Messiah would establish a literal kingdom upon the earth originated with the Jews. Many of them placed literal interpretations upon those prophecies which foretold the coming of Christ, and as a result they expected him to set up a temporal throne, subdue the nations, and restore again the kingdom of Israel. This gross error led them to reject Christ, oppose his spiritual kingdom, and consent to his death. They wanted only an earthly kingdom, and hence rejected and crucified the Son of God. He did not meet their expectation, therefore he became a stumbling-block to them. He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures"; "my kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18:36). At one

time they tried to take him by force and make him a king, but he departed from them.

His kingdom is purely spiritual and divine. If it were of a secular nature, then his servants would have contended. They would have opposed force with force, as the kingdoms of this world do in their wars. But since his kingdom is not of this world, no resistance was made. Jesus acknowledged himself a king, saying, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world"; that is, to set up a kingdom and reign as a king. But he clearly sets forth the nature of his kingdom when he declared it to be, not temporal or literal, but purely spiritual—"not of this world." Through all his teaching he endeavored to show the people that his mission was to establish the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of men and there reign as King of peace. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17: 20, 21). This positive text stands in square contradiction to the teaching of the modern advocates of a future literal reign upon earth.

The Pharisees evidently believed that Messiah would establish a temporal kingdom and set up his throne in Jerusalem. So as Christ claimed to be the true Messiah, they naturally asked him when the kingdom of heaven should come. How clear his answer: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." This would not be true were it a literal kingdom, for such would come with observation. The fact that it "cometh not with observation," or outward show, positively proves it to be a spiritual kingdom; Christ ruling and reigning in the hearts of his people. Yes, dear reader, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," even "the kingdom of heaven," a kingdom greater than Alexander or Napoleon ever swayed scepter over. And all this you will find in the full salvation of Jesus Christ.

The kingdom of God—the glorious religion of the Messiah—did not come with great outward display, pomp, or show, but as leaven, which quietly leavens the whole lump, to which Jesus himself likened it. Mark well this point; it is another indication of the spiritual nature of the kingdom. "The kingdom of God is within you." Some render this "among you," and others, "in the midst of you"; but any of these

statements proves that since the kingdom was then among men, it is not a future thing. I am inclined to believe that the Common Version gives Christ's true meaning. It might be well to notice that the Greek word from which this is taken is *entos*. This word appears in but one other text in the New Testament—"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is *within* the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Matt. 23:26). To substitute "among" for "within" in this last text would be ridiculous.

Christ was simply teaching that the Jews were looking for the wrong thing. They expected a literal reign, and he was endeavoring to show them that his reign is spiritual and that his kingdom is in the hearts of his people. By the expression "within you," he by no means meant to convey the idea that his kingdom was in those wicked Pharisees, but that his reign and kingdom was not literally located "here" or "there," but in the hearts of men.

Possessing the kingdom and enjoying this glorious reign is not deferred to some future age, but Christ made very clear the fact that it was a present reality. The nature of the kingdom is clearly seen in the five essentials

that constitute it. Christ is King. His spiritual domain extends over heaven and earth. His throne is a spiritual throne, called a throne of grace and holiness, to which we can now come for favors from his hand. The subjects of his kingdom are spiritual men and women who, as "living stones, are built up a spiritual house, . . . to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5, A. S. V.). And the law that governs this kingdom is a spiritual law. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The unconverted are instructed to seek it: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

The kingdom of God is spiritual because it has a spiritual door of entrance. The moment an individual is saved from his sins, he is inducted into the kingdom of God. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble

himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 1-4). The language of this text is very clear. The kingdom of heaven is a present reality. Jesus was not speaking with reference to a future age, but to the dispensation of salvation. To be great in the kingdom of heaven is to fill a place of usefulness and efficiency in the work and service of God. The way to reach such a place of usefulness and efficiency is to humble ourselves as little children.

The only door of entrance into this kingdom is conversion. In Christ's talk with Nicodemus the same truth is expressed—"Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God"; "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." At another time Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?" (Luke 18: 24, 26). Salvation and the kingdom of God are here classed altogether. Jesus plainly taught that in order to be saved, people must, in one sense, forsake all. And of course this includes riches. It is hard for those who are rich in this world's goods, and

who have their hearts set upon their riches, to comply with these demands.

Entering the kingdom and getting saved is the same thing. Here again we see the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. Since it is through the new birth that men enter the kingdom, there are none in the real kingdom of God but those who are saved. The work of placing men and women in the kingdom belongs to God, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Since the new birth is a spiritual birth, and the door into the kingdom is a spiritual door, it is further proved that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom; for how could a man enter a literal kingdom through a spiritual door?

"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). Since the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was fully ushered in at Pentecost, and the kingdom came in all its fulness and glory in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the establishing of the Christian church as a separate, distinct institution for the salvation of the

world, the least child of God has greater privileges and higher attainments in the divine life than John had, for he died before Pentecost.

Jesus saith unto them, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13). These texts also show that the kingdom was present at the time Jesus spoke these words and that people were entering it. When the disciples went forth preaching the kingdom of God, they did not speak of something future, or point people to a millennial age, but they declared the blessings and privileges to be enjoyed in the present. People so understood it, and as fast as they accepted the gospel, they pressed into the kingdom.

Paul makes a definite statement on this point in Rom. 14:17—"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." This text is decisive. It shows clearly the nature of Christ's kingdom. "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

"And having been questioned by the Pharisees, when the reign of God doth come, he answered, . . . The reign of God is within you."—*Young's Bible Translation.* This is too clear to need comment. Some latter-day preachers try to evade the truth contained in these texts by affirming that Jesus and Paul did not mean what they said. Wilson, who translated the Emphatic Diaglott, was a Second Adventist and believed in a literal kingdom. He renders it "among you"; but nothing is gained by this, for it would still prove that instead of the establishment of the kingdom in a future age, it was then present among the people. I believe "within you" is the correct rendering and expresses the truth Jesus wished to convey. Beside the Common Version, it is rendered "within you" by the following translations: American Standard Revised, Bible Union, Young, Sawyer, and Campbell. "Righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost," constitute the elements of the kingdom of God, and all these are found in the hearts and lives of the fully saved.

In Christ's teachings he likened the kingdom of heaven to many different things. This he did in order to bring out its different phases. A careful study of the different parables Jesus

used with reference to his kingdom reveals the fact that it is purely spiritual in its nature and also that it is a present reality in this dispensation. For example, in Matthew 13: 11 Jesus said to his disciples, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." He spoke this directly with reference to the parable of the Sower, but it has a present application.

In Matt. 13: 24-30, 36-43, we have the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. The introduction of this parable reads as follows: "*The kingdom of heaven* is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field." In the interpretation of this parable, Jesus said, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one"; "the enemy that sowed them is the devil." Here, then, we have two kingdoms in this world: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The tares are all in the kingdom of Satan. None make up the kingdom of God but the "good seed," for "the good seed are the children of the kingdom." The wheat and the tares will grow together in the world until the end of time, then the final separation will take

place. The one class will be cast into the furnace of fire, and the other class, called the righteous, shall then shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of the Father. This is another proof that the kingdom of God is now present and of a spiritual nature.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:47-50).

Like a net cast into the sea, when the gospel goes into a community, there are some who really accept it, meet all the conditions requisite to salvation, and as a result are saved and enter the kingdom of God. They are in the kingdom by possession. There are others who, under the same preaching, simply get into a mere profession of the religion of Jesus Christ. These are in the kingdom in a nominal sense; that is, in name only, or by profession. It was in this sense that Judas Iscariot was found among the

true disciples of Jesus, even after he had become a thief. It was in this same sense that Simon Magus continued with Philip during his work in Samaria. But in the end of the world a final separation will be made between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

There were hypocrites in the days of Christ, and no doubt there always will be. There is also in the world a true Christianity, a clean and pure church. At the same time there is a false church, a counterfeit Christianity. All these are looked upon by the unprofessed Christian world as the kingdom, or church; but the final day of reckoning will clearly reveal which is the true and which is the false.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13:45, 46). The pearl of great price here referred to is salvation. It is the most valuable thing that any one can possess; for it is of more worth than all the gold and silver, rubies and diamonds of a million worlds like this. Earth's riches, honors, and pleasures, fade into insignificance when compared to the value

of salvation. In order to possess this pearl, the wise merchant of the parable sold all that he had. In this Jesus meant to convey to our minds the fact that in order to become a possessor of salvation we must forsake all. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple." Paul testified on this point, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, . . . that I might win Christ." Mark the fact that the kingdom of heaven is like this. Here again is positive proof that the kingdom of God is present and spiritual in its nature.

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." This parable is recorded by Mark only. The doctrine of the kingdom, received in a good and honest heart, is like seed sown by a man in his ground which has been properly prepared to receive it.

The grace of God is planted in our hearts, and day by day it grows and develops until we become ripened for the future, eternal, glory-world. The seed thus sown in honest hearts brings forth fruit with patience, and this fruit daily increases, though we do not know how the word and the Spirit effect this increase.

How a plant grows is a mystery which the wisest philosophers in the universe can not fully explain. "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin." Spiritual growth is not effected by self-energy; but if we meet the conditions of growth, it will continue of itself. The kingdom of God which is planted in the soul by the word of life, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is first very small, like a blade, but it is full of promises; for a good blade shows there is a good seed at the bottom and that the soil in which it is grown is good also. Next the ear, because of a strong stalk. Faith and love in a believer's soul show increase abundantly. Then the full corn, the soul purified from all unrighteousness and made a partaker of the divine nature. This represents the ripened grain. After we are saved and sanctified this growth continues until we are ripened, and then he putteth in the sickle and

gathers the harvest in the future, eternal state. Here again, we are made to see the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom.

"And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it" (Mark 4:30-32). This parable is a representation of the progress of the gospel in the world, and I believe it comprehends the growth of grace in the human soul; that grace which leads the soul into the fulness of glory.

The gospel began in a very small way, by the personal ministry of Christ and the instrumentality of a few humble fishermen, along the shores of Galilee and in the villages of Judea. But although it began in such a small and humble way, it has spread from hamlet to city, from vale to hill, from the river to the ends of the earth; until in every nation of the earth today, and on almost every island of the sea are found true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the

kingdom of grace. Like a mighty tree whose branches stretch forth, it has reached out into all the world. This kingdom penetrates the remotest corners of the earth today, and its blessed gospel is ringing out in every nation. "It is cutting its way through the impregnable jungles of Africa to the great lakes at its core. It has broken through the granite walls of China, and entrenched itself in the heart of Peking. It has pierced the heavy vale of Korean shame, and kissed with its warming beams every island of the sea, every nation of the earth." Blessed be the name of the Lord forever. While monarchies have risen and fallen, crumbled, and passed away, the kingdom set up by the Lord Jesus Christ has stood the storms of ages, and will stand when this old world is wrapped in mighty sheets of flame.

In Matt. 20: 1-16 we have the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. A careful study of this parable shows that it has a present application. Mark the fact that Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like this. Again, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13: 33). This, no doubt, is intended to show how, from a

very small beginning, the gospel of Christ would pervade all the nations of the world and fill them with righteousness and holiness; that is, that the influence of the gospel would some day be felt in all the world. It also has, no doubt, an application to the individual life and experience, for when the grace of God is implanted in our hearts, it is intended, like leaven, eventually to eliminate from us everything unlike the divine character and to make us more and more like Christ, changing us into the same image, from glory to glory. Thus we see that when Christ taught men about the kingdom of God, he did not point them to a future age, but in all his parables and lessons on it he demonstrates that it is present and of a spiritual nature.

When a soul fully complies with all the Bible conditions, then by the work of conversion—the new birth—it enters through Christ the door into the church, or kingdom, of God. This is the sense in which the door of the kingdom was opened and men entered into it during Christ's personal ministry. But even after conversion there yet remains in the heart of the believer a sinful nature, the carnal mind. This causes an inward warfare between the flesh and the spirit.

Before Christ can reign supreme, this inward foe must be destroyed, the throne of iniquity must be obliterated. This is accomplished in the glorious work of entire sanctification. So the fulness of God in the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the complete establishment of his throne of holiness in our hearts is something for which the believer must seek, therefore he prays, "Thy kingdom come", (Matt. 6: 10). There is a sense in which God's people can pray this prayer in any meeting where they desire the salvation of the lost. Their cry is that the kingdom of God may come into the hearts of the people by the salvation of their souls. The promise is, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

When the believer presents himself a living sacrifice upon Christ the altar, when the last condition is fully met in a complete death to sin and self, then the Holy Ghost, with the blood of Christ, destroys the body of sin and moves in, in all his fulness as a personal comforter, to abide with the soul forever. "God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness." "The reign of God is within you." This is the sense in which the

"saints of the Most High" "take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." This kingdom is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MILLENNIAL THEORY

The idea of a millennial reign proceeded from Judaism, for "among the Jews the representation was growing, that the Messiah would reign a thousand years upon earth. Such products of Jewish imagination passed over into Christianity."—*Neander's History of Christian Dogmas, Vol. I, p. 248.*

"The Jews generally believed that the Messiah would establish a literal or earthly kingdom. And even some of them believed that Messiah's reign would last a thousand years." Before the death of all the first apostles, this Jewish notion was revived in the teaching of an ungodly heretic by the name of Cerinthus.

In Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book III, chap. 28, is preserved a fragment from the writings of Caius, who lived about the close of the second century. This extract gives us the following account of Cerinthus' heresy. "But

Cerinthus, by means of revelations which he pretended were written by a great apostle, also falsely pretended to wonderful things, as if they were showed him by angels, asserting, that after the resurrection there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ, and that the flesh, i. e. men, again inhabiting Jerusalem, would be subject to desires and pleasures." Eusebius says of Cerinthus: "Being also an enemy to the Scriptures, with a view to deceive men, he said 'that there would be a space of a thousand years for celebrating nuptial festivities.' . . . One of the doctrines that he taught was, that Christ would have an earthly kingdom."

This is the true origin of the millennial theory among Christians. The reader will observe how lightly Caius speaks of Cerinthus' idea of the kingdom of Christ being set up on earth after the resurrection. He says this doctrine was something which Cerinthus pretended was shown to him by angels. Caius must, therefore, have believed the orthodox teachings of the Scriptures that Christ's kingdom was set up at his first coming. Observe also that Caius calls Cerinthus "an enemy to the Scriptures" and one who had "a view to deceive men." This language he uses with special reference to the

one thousand years this millennarian claimed would be spent in sensuality. Notice also that he believed in an earthly kingdom.

Cerinthus lived in the days of the apostle John. We will now call your attention to the attitude of the beloved apostle toward this millennial teacher. Irenæus, who was born about 120 A. D. and who was acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of John (*Eusebius' Eccl. Hist., Book V, chap. 24*), states that while John was at Ephesus he entered a bath to wash, but when he found that Cerinthus was within he refused to bathe there, left the building, and exhorted those with him to do the same, saying, "Let us flee, lest the bath fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of the truth, is within."—*Eusebius' Eccl. Hist., Book III, chap. 28.* Let this be a rebuke to modern millennial advocates. They claim their doctrine is well founded in the Revelation of John. But John called the founder of their theory "that enemy of the truth."

"Cerinthus required his followers to worship the supreme God. . . . He promised them a resurrection of their bodies, which would be succeeded by exquisite delights in the millenary reign of Christ. . . . For Cerinthus supposed that Christ would hereafter return . . .

and would reign with his followers during a thousand years in Palestine."—*Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., p. 50.*

"Cerinthus required his followers to retain part of the Mosaical law, but to regulate their lives by the example of Christ; and taught that after the resurrection Christ would reign upon earth, with his faithful disciples, a thousand years, which would be spent in the highest sensual indulgences. This mixture of Judaism and oriental philosophy was calculated to make many converts, and this sect soon became very numerous. They admitted a part of St. Matthew's Gospel; but rejected the rest, and held the epistles of St. Paul in great abhorrence." —*Gregory and Ruter's Church Hist., p. 30.*

"Even though the floods of the nations and the vain superstitions of heretics should revolt against their true faith, they are overcome, and shall be dissolved as the foam, because Christ is the rock by which, and on which, the church is founded. And thus it is overcome by no traces of maddened men. Therefore they are not to be heard who assure themselves that there is to be an earthly reign of a thousand years; who think, that is to say, with the heretic Cerinthus. *For the kingdom of Christ is now eternal in his*

saints."—Commentary on the Apocalypse, by Victorinus, one of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

Thank God for this testimony of history! Observe, dear reader, how closely the modern millennium teachers cling to the doctrines of their founder. Cerinthus taught that "Christ would have an earthly kingdom"; "after the resurrection there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ"; the resurrection would be followed by "exquisite delights in the millenary reign of Christ"; "Christ would hereafter return . . . and would reign with his followers during a thousand years in Palestine." The principal difference is that most of his modern followers have dropped the idea of sensuality.

But how did the early church regard the doctrine of Cerinthus? They declare that he was "an enemy to the Scriptures, with a view to deceive men." They called him a "heretic." They termed his doctrine the "vain superstitions of heretics," and called all who believed and advocated the same "maddened men." The apostle John called Cerinthus "that enemy of the truth." They taught that "they are not to be heard who assure themselves that there is to be an earthly reign of a thousand years."

What was the doctrine of the early church ac-

cording to history? "Christ is the rock on which, and by which, the church is founded." "The kingdom of Christ is now eternal in his saints." "It was the universal feeling among primitive Christians that they were living in the last period of the world's history."—Ency. *Brit., 9th Ed., Vol. VIII, p. 534.* The reason they believed this was because the New Testament was their faith, and this is the doctrine of the New Testament throughout. No wonder Cerinthus and his followers rejected part of St. Matthew's Gospel and "held the epistles of Paul in great abhorrence." Just so do modern millennium teachers dwell very little in the plain Gospels and Epistles to prove their doctrines, but speculate in prophecy and revelation.

Having seen that Cerinthus and his false doctrine were rejected by God's church, we will now come to the next chief advocate of millennialism, Papias, who lived in the first half of the second century. Eusebius, under the heading "The Writings of Papias," says of him: "The same historian also gives other accounts, which he says he adds as received by him from unwritten tradition, likewise certain strange parables of our Lord, and of his doctrine, and some other matters rather too fabulous. In

these he says there would be a certain millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth; which things he appears to have imagined, as if they were authorized by the apostolic narrations, not understanding correctly those matters which they propounded mystically in their representations. For he was very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses."—*Eusebius' Eccl. Hist., Book III, chap. 39, p. 115.*

Historians generally tell us that Papias was a very zealous advocate of this imaginary reign of Christ on earth. "The first distinguished opponent of this doctrine was Origen, who attacked it with great earnestness and ingenuity, and seems, in spite of some opposition, to have thrown it into general discredit."—*Wadington's History, p. 56.*

"This obscure doctrine was probably known to but very few except the Fathers of the church, and is very sparingly mentioned by them during the first two centuries; and there is reason to believe that it scarcely attained much notoriety, even among the learned Christians, until it was made a matter of controversy by Origen, and then rejected by the greater ma-

jority. In fact, we find Origen himself asserting that it was confined to those of the simpler sort."—*Ibid.*

Next among the advocates of this doctrine was Nepos, a bishop in Egypt. He advocated the doctrine about A. D. 255. We here insert the following from Eusebius's History, Book VII, chap. 23, under the heading "Nepos, and His Schism." "He taught, that the promises given to holy men in the Scriptures, should be understood more as the Jews understood them, and supposed that there would be a certain millennium of sensual luxury on this earth. Thinking, therefore, that he could establish his own opinion by the Revelation of John. . . . He [Nepos] asserts that there will be an earthly reign of Christ."

"Though millennialism had been suppressed by the early church, it was nevertheless from time to time revived by heretical sects."—*Dr. Schaff's History, p. 299.*

"Nowhere in the discourses of Jesus is there a hint of a limited duration of the Messianic kingdom. The apostolic epistles are equally free from any trace of Chiliasm."—*Ency. Brit., Art. "Millennium."*

To sum up the uniform voice of history, the

theory of a literal kingdom and reign on the earth was gathered from Jewish fabulous "apocalypse," "unwritten tradition," carnal misapprehensions, pretended visions, supposition, and "Jewish imaginations." Its advocates were said to be very limited in their understanding, and "of the simpler sort." Millennialism had the worst heretic in the first century for its founder, and its chief advocates thereafter were rejected by the early church. From time to time it was revived by "heretical sects." The vain, worldly expectation that the Messiah would establish a literal kingdom caused the Jews to reject him and his spiritual kingdom. They wanted only an earthly kingdom; hence rejectd and crucified the Son of God. As soon as the church began to apostatize and to lose the glory of the spiritual kingdom, vain ambitions awakened the old Jewish desire for a literal kingdom. And so it has come to pass that at this time of dead formality we have a multitude of men teaching the same error and false hope that crucified Christ nearly nineteen hundred years ago; namely, a literal kingdom of Christ.

THE KINGDOM OF GRACE

The prophets with one accord looked forward to a time when God's special favor would be extended to all the nations of the earth. The Lord made a covenant with Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. This was confirmed and repeated to both Isaac and Jacob and handed down to all their posterity.

The Jews, during the entire dispensation of the law, caught the inspiration of this promise and "prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" (1 Pet. 1:10). The Psalms of David are sprinkled with brilliant prophesies relative to a time when the free grace of God should flow and all people could drink of the sparkling waters of full salvation.

The evangelistic prophet Isaiah foretold the dawning of a new dispensation which would be the most propitious age of the grace of God to the human family. In fulfilment of all these predictions, Christ came and established his kingdom of righteousness in the world. As he stood at the door of his kingdom, he invited all to come. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

. . . And ye shall find rest unto your souls." Thus "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

His kingdom on earth is a kingdom of grace. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." His kingdom of grace was established for the purpose of overthrowing the kingdom of Satan and sin by delivering men from its power. The entire sinful world is represented as being in prison and slavery—in bondage. Christ came to set the captives free, to open the "prison to them that are bound." This deliverance came by free grace, and not because men merited it, for no meritorious works could make them accepted in the Beloved.

Before Christ came, sin held the dominion; but now since he came, Paul says to those who enter His kingdom: "Sin shall not have the dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14); "But where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: That, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20, 21, A. S. V.). Paul's argument

is this: Adam stands at the head of the whole creation, which was marred and corrupted by his sin. Satan robbed him of his blessed state of holiness and righteousness, and he himself became the prince of this world and reigned for four thousand years. Sin and death held sway over all mankind; but in the fulness of time Christ came in person to earth and established his kingdom of full salvation among men. In this sense he dethroned Satan, and he himself was raised up "the Prince of life," "to be a Prince and a Savior."

As before noted, sin reigned in the human heart and life; but when Christ casts out sin and establishes his kingdom of righteousness in the heart, then in the very place where sin abounded, grace abounds more exceedingly. In the very place where sin reigned unto death, now grace reigns "through righteousness, unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5: 17). Thus, the fully saved, through the grace of God, are enabled to reign in this life over Satan, sin, and all the powers of evil. This is the kingdom of grace. In fact, Christ's throne in this dispensa-

tion is termed a throne of grace, to which we may all 'boldly come and find mercy and grace to help in time of need' (Heb. 4:16).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). The dispensation of the gospel of full salvation and the grace of God in the human heart is here meant—his kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This can never fail, because it is the last dispensation. It is the climax of moral redemption. It shall stand forever, hence can not be moved. This is the heavenly kingdom which God has given us. Therefore, let us accept this grace which will enable us to serve God acceptably.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great

rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32: 1, 2).

Isaiah has been frequently called the evangelistic prophet of the Old Testament. No doubt this is because so many of his prophecies have direct reference to Messiah and his kingdom. Some have taught that the texts quoted above primarily refer to Hezekiah and his good reign. But a careful reading of the whole chapter seems to make clear the fact that Christ and his kingdom are referred to. During the reign of righteousness here predicted, the Spirit from on high was to be poured out upon the people. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass."

All this refers to the blessings of the present dispensation; nor did the prophet overdraw the picture, for the fully redeemed have by actual experience proved that when Christ is crowned in the human heart and life, and reigns there in righteousness, this is accomplished by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and the effect is "quietness and assurance forever"—a

peaceful reign. O the glories and beauties of salvation now experienced by all those who are fully saved!

Christ's coming was heralded as producing peace on earth and good-will toward men. This does not imply, as some have concluded, peace among the temporal nations; but only among those people of all nations who are saved and redeemed through the blood of Christ. There are many predictions in the Old Testament relative to Christ's kingdom and reign that are used by millennium teachers to prove that there will be a future, literal reign of Christ upon this earth; but a careful reading of each one in the light of the New Testament clearly shows that they all are to reach their fulfilment during the gospel age. A number of these we shall now consider.

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psa. 72:7, 8). "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord" (Psa. 22:27). "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover

the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isa. 60: 1-5). "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass . . . and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9: 9, 10).

In these texts are foretold the universal domain of Christ and the intent of his coming and reign. The question is, Where shall we look for the fulfilment? A careful reading of each of these predictions shows that the diffusion of light and salvation among the Gentiles is here promised. Under the law the true God was known only to Israel; but in the gospel, the offer of salvation is extended to all the nations of the world. Under the present dispensation of grace, all nations have the privilege of entering the kingdom of God and enjoying the sal-

vation of Jesus Christ. When we turn to the New Testament, we see clearly the fulfilment of the above predictions, expressed in such texts as the following:

"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78, 79). At the birth of the Savior, the angel's announcement was: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." When Simeon took the infant Jesus into his arms, he declared, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:46, 48). "On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts

10:45). "Then, hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts 28:28).

Here, then, we see the fulfilment of the prophecies that promised salvation to the Gentiles and all the ends of the earth. Instead of referring to a future age, they referred to the diffusion of the gospel among all nations during the Christian dispensation. As before observed, under the law the true God was known only to Israel, the Jews, who were favored above every nation of the earth; but in this dispensation, "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). "And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). These texts are decisive.

We are now living in what is preeminently the day of salvation. The age when Christ shall have dominion from sea to sea and to the

ends of the earth is the age ushered in by his first advent. A careful reading of Zech. 9:9, 10, makes this clear. The earth can not perish, until every continent, island, and people is illuminated with the light of the gospel. There must be a universal spread of the truth on all the inhabitable globe. This great work began with the ministry of Jesus, was carried forward by the labors of the apostles and the early ministry, and has been more or less progressive throughout the entire Christian era. Before the death of the first apostles it is positively stated that the gospel had sounded out in all the earth. Of course this has reference to the then-known civilized world. Gradually it has spread from hamlet to city, from vale to hill, from the continent to the island, yea, from pole to pole, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. Out of all nations of the earth, people have been, and are being, saved and brought into the kingdom of God. The globe has been circumnavigated; the great waters of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans have been crossed and recrossed; the Arctic and Antarctic Oceans have been traversed by modern sea vessels; nearly every country on the earth and every island of the sea have been explored, and

great and mighty nations on earth are being penetrated by modern civilization. Such great countries as China, India, Japan, and Africa, which had never been reached by Christianity, except in a very limited way, are today opening their doors to the gospel and with outstretched arms are calling for salvation from sin. The universal spread of the gospel among all the nations of earth is being accomplished in this age. Jesus gave this achievement as a positive sign of his coming—"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come."

The following declarations have been applied by millennium teachers to a future age: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psa. 110: 1-3). "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. . . . Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with

a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." I shall now prove that these texts have a positive fulfilment in the present dispensation.

"For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 34, 36). Peter here quotes the first verse of the second Psalm verbatim, and then positively declares that it is now fulfilled. In Acts 13: 32, 33, we have a definite statement that the second Psalm is now being fulfilled—"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God *hath fulfilled* the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. 1: 1-8 makes very clear the fact that the prediction made in the second Psalm is now fulfilled. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he

hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? . . . when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. . . . Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." This text is so clear that comment is not necessary. It simply proves that the prediction in the second Psalm has its fulfilment in the Christian dispensation, extending from the time Christ triumphantly rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, "crowned with glory and honor," "head of all principality and power," to his second advent at the end of this age, when he will come to judgment in power and great glory.

We will note another prophecy that has troubled many. "For the kingdom is the Lord's:

and he is the governor among the nations . . . all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him. . . . A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born" (Psa. 22: 27-31). In a former chapter we have clearly shown that the kingdom is now the Lord's and he is governor among the nations; that is, he is the prince of the kings of the earth and rules in the kingdoms of men. The influence of his glorious gospel, the law of his kingdom, is felt among the nations and kindreds of earth. Declaring "his righteousness unto a people that shall be born" has reference to the diffusion of the glorious gospel among the Gentile nations. "All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him" will reach its fulfilment beyond the resurrection in the great day of judgment. "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . . every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every

tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In Zech. 14: 7-9 we have a clear prediction of the accomplishment of the gospel in the closing days of the Christian dispensation. It is said, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one."

So we find that instead of these scriptures teaching a more glorious dispensation yet future, they teach the privileges and blessings of the gospel age. This line of thought could be very much drawn out; I have simply given a few clear examples of texts that are used to prove a more propitious age of grace and salvation future, but which, when carefully examined in the light of the New Testament Scriptures, apply exclusively to the accomplishments and blessings of Christ during the Christian era.

TIME OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT PREDICTED

The prophets with one accord pointed to the first advent of Christ as the time when the kingdom of God was to be established. All the predictions which related to its establishment reached their fulfilment at that time.

We will begin with Daniel's prophecy. In the second chapter we read that Nebuchadnez-

zar, king of Babylon, dreamed a dream, which was afterwards made known to him by Daniel the prophet. In the dream he saw a great image. "This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:31-35).

These five short verses open one of the most sublime chapters of human history. It is so comprehensive that the period which it covers, beginning more than twenty-five centuries ago, reaches from that far distant point, past epochs and ages, over into the eternal state—yes, to all eternity.

First in the vision are brought to view four

universal monarchies, which flourished in succession in ancient times. The first of these is represented by the head of gold, interpreted by the prophet as follows: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. . . . Thou art this head of gold" (vs. 37, 38). By this we understand that the head of gold represented the Chaldean kingdom. It was a golden kingdom in a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, lay in the garden of the East. According to Herodotus, the city wall was a perfect square, 15 miles on each side, 350 feet high, and 87 feet thick. It had 150 gates of solid brass. This city contained many remarkable things, its hanging gardens being reckoned among the seven wonders of the world. I presume it is safe to say that never before did the earth see a city like this. With the earth prostrate at her feet, she sat "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency."

While Babylon was founded by Nimrod over two thousand years before Christ, it did not enter the field of prophecy until connected with the people of God, which was about 606 B. C. Here the head of gold began in history, and it

continued until 538 B. C., when, during the reign of Belshazzar, the kingdom fell into the hands of the Medes and the Persians (see Daniel 5).

The Medo-Persian kingdom was represented by the breast and arms of silver, interpreted by Daniel as follows: "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (v. 39). It was not inferior in power nor in the extent to which it carried its conquests, for Cyrus built up the most extensive empire that had ever existed; but it was inferior in wealth, luxury, and magnificence. The Medo-Persian kingdom, however, was finally overthrown by the Grecians about 286 B. C.

The Grecian empire is what was represented by the belly and thighs of brass, interpreted by Daniel as "another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth" (v. 39). The conquests of Grecia under Alexander have no parallel in historic annals for suddenness and rapidity. The legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay, Daniel interprets to be the "fourth kingdom" in its strong and divided condition (vs. 40-43). A careful reading of verses 41 and 42 will show that the feet of iron

and clay are termed "the kingdom," though divided. This was Rome.

Thus far in this vision the image represents four universal kingdoms; namely, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold" (vs. 44, 45). This language is so clear that it would seem impossible to misunderstand it. "In the days of these kings"—kingdoms. Only four kingdoms are seen in the image. Only four are spoken of in the interpretation. In their days, or before they should pass off the field of action, the God of heaven would set up his everlasting kingdom. While they yet held the dominion, the stone would be cut out and would smash them to pieces. Ah, beloved reader, how wonderful the fulfilment!

It was when Rome, the fourth of the above kingdoms, had reached the summit of its glory

and power; when its domain was so large that it was denominated "all the world" (Luke 2:1); when Augustus Cæsar was an absolute sovereign, ruling over three hundred millions of people;—it was then that there was born in the village of Bethlehem, in Judea, a babe who, though he was cradled in a manger and his infant cries were no doubt mingled with the lowing of oxen and the bleating of lambs, was destined to establish this everlasting kingdom. Without fagot or sword, without war and bloodshed, with no weapons but the gospel of Christ, the blood of the Lamb, and burning testimony, this kingdom marched onward with conquering power, until the heathen kingdoms of darkness were broken in pieces. The lion-hearted rulers of nations handed over their scepters to the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," whose throne is forever and ever; and a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of his kingdom (Heb. 1:8). In fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). The dispensation of the glorious gospel of infinite mercy and manifestation of eternal truth by Jesus Christ

was now to open up fully to all mankind. This is called a kingdom because it has laws, all the moral precepts of the gospel; subjects, all who believe in Christ Jesus; and a king, the Sovereign of heaven and earth.

From the foregoing scripture we learn three things: (1) That everything that is done is according to a plan laid by divine wisdom, and not performed till the time appointed. (2) That the kingdom of God and his reign by grace begin with repentance of past sins. (3) That this reign of grace is at hand, and that it began with Christ's ministry, when the time was announced "fulfilled." Now is the time to enter in, and nothing but an obstinate perservance in sin and impenitence can keep a soul out of it.

Christ came to establish his church, of which he is the everlasting head and governor. He set up a government and kingdom which is eternal. Revolutions may destroy the kingdoms of earth, but the gates of hell and death shall never be able to destroy the kingdom, or church, of Christ. His is the only kingdom that shall never have an end. Dr. Adam Clark expresses it in this language: "The kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory form the endless government of Christ." This was the stone that smote the

image upon its feet and broke them in pieces. And, as portrayed in this prophecy, pagan Rome was broken in pieces under the iron rod of the gospel of Christ, before it finally fell, A. D. 476. That iron kingdom, which once ruled the earth, crumbled to pieces under the hammer of the gospel and holiness, and the church of God triumphed. Christianity became the fifth universal kingdom. Rome was the last earthly kingdom that ever swayed universal authority, or ever will. But Christ's kingdom is universal. The uttermost parts of the earth are his possession. In every nation are to be found disciples of Christ. Kings and magistrates bow before him and do him homage.

Before passing from this prophecy, we shall take a little space to consider the erroneous position of millenarians. They argue that, as the ten toes of the image represent the ten divided kingdoms of Rome, these were the kingdoms to be in existence when Christ should set up his everlasting kingdom; and since none of these ten kingdoms were in existence when Christ appeared in his first advent, they conclude that the establishment of Christ's kingdom is yet future. Their position is false for the following reasons:

1. The ten toes are not called kingdoms in the prophecy. The legs, feet, and toes are all summed up in this prophecy as "the kingdom" —the "fourth kingdom" (vs. 40-43). Only the four universal monarchies—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome—are called kingdoms. The image, as a whole, represents these four. They are called kingdoms. "And in the days of these kings" (kingdoms) the God of heaven was to set up his everlasting kingdom; that is, during their reign, while they yet held dominion. As before proved, this was fulfilled by the coming of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom, or church, during the reign of Rome. Christianity fulfilled the prophecy in crushing these heathen powers.

2. The time can not reach to Christ's second coming, for none of the original ten kingdoms are now existing. Three of them fell under popery (Dan. 7:8, 20, 24). They have all long since passed away. There are in existence today probably twenty fragments of those original kingdoms, but the toes of the image no longer exist.

3. The image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was evidently a well-proportioned man. His toes were of the proper size. But

millennialists would say that Nebuchadnezzar saw a man with toes longer than the man. Let us measure that image from the crown of his head to his toes. The Babylonian kingdom, represented by the head of gold, came into prophecy about 600 B. C. The first of the ten kingdoms of Rome dates from the latter half of the fourth century. This kingdom belonged to the Huns whose European history began in A. D. 372. Thus from Babylonia to the Huns is a period of 972 years. So the whole image measured less than one thousand years, till we reach the toes. Now, if those toes still exist, as millenarians suppose, they would measure over 1,500 years. That would make a man with toes 500 years longer than the man. Such are the absurdities of those who believe in a future literal kingdom to be established upon earth.

4. The stone struck the image upon his feet. But since there is no longer feet or toes of that image left, the kingdom of God must be already established. When set up by Christ it was a small stone, but it began to enlarge and finally became so great that when Rome became brittle, Christianity struck her such an awful blow that she flew to pieces.

5. All the New Testament scriptures teach

that the kingdom was set up at Christ's first advent. See Mark 1:14, 15; John 18:36, 37; Matt. 21:4, 5; Heb. 1:7, 8; Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:20-22; Heb. 2:9; Heb. 4:16; Luke 17:20-22; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 1:5, 6; Rom. 5:17; Luke 16:16; Matt. 3:2; Matt. 11:12; Matt. 12:28; Mark 12:34; Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27; Mark 9:1; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9. These twenty-two positive texts, with many more, are surely a sufficient reason for our not accepting the false doctrine of a future kingdom upon earth. The only kingdom yet future is the everlasting kingdom of glory above, which we shall enter when time is no more.

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is no other than Christianity, which constitutes the everlasting kingdom of God. This kingdom is a divine institution because it was established by Christ himself. It began with the preaching of John the Baptist, continued during the personal ministry of Christ, and was fully established on the day of Pentecost. Earthly kingdoms have risen and fallen, but this one stands unshaken upon the rock of eternal truth.

I will here insert the following excellent exegesis of Dan. 2:31-35 from Dr. Adam Clark's

Commentary: " 'A stone cut out of the mountain without hands.' That Jesus Christ has been represented by a stone, we have already seen; but this stone refers chiefly to his church, which is represented as a spiritual building, which he supports as a foundation stone, connects and strengthens as a corner stone, and finishes and adorns as a top stone. He is called a stone also in reference to the prejudice conceived against him by his countrymen. Because he did not come in worldly pomp, they therefore refused to receive him; and to them he is represented as 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.'

"But here he is represented under another notion, viz., that of a stone projected from a catapult, or some military engine, which smote the image on its feet; that is, it smote the then existing government at its foundation, or principles of support; and by destroying these, brought the whole into ruin.

"By this stroke the clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces and became like chaff which the wind carried away. . . . The Roman empire . . . was represented by the legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron and clay; but as we find that not

only the iron and clay, but also the brass, silver, and gold were confounded and destroyed by that stroke, it follows that there was then remaining in and compacted with the Roman government, something of the distinguishing marks and principles of all the preceding empires; not only as to their territorial possessions, but also as to their distinctive characteristics. There were at the time here referred to in the Roman empire, the splendor of the Chaldeans, the riches of the Persians, the discipline of the Greeks, and the strength of the Egyptian and Syrian governments, mingled with the incoherence and imbecility of those empires, kingdoms, and states which the Romans had subdued. In short, with every political excellence, it contains the principles of its own destruction, and its persecution of the church of Christ accellerated its ruin.

"As the stone represents Christ and his governing influence, it is here said to be a kingdom, that is, a state of prevailing rule and government; and was to arise in the days of those kings of kingdoms (v. 44). And this is literally true; for its rise was when the Roman government, partaking of all the characteristics of the preceding empires, was at its zenith of

imperial splendor, military glory, legislative authority, and literary eminence. . . .

"This stone or government was cut out of the mountain . . . Judea being, at the time of the birth of Christ, a Roman province.

"It was cut without hands; probably alluding to the miraculous birth of our Lord, but particularly to the spiritual nature of his kingdom and government, in which no worldly policy, human maxims, or military force were employed; for it was not by might nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts.

"The kingdom of the stone smites, breaks to pieces, and destroys all the other kingdoms. . . .

"The stone began to strike the image, when the apostles went out into every part of the Roman empire, pulling down idolatry, and founding Christian churches.

"Constantine . . . in A. D. 324 totally defeated Licinius . . . and became sole emperor. He terminated the reign of idolatry in A. D. 331 by an edict ordering the destruction of all the heathen temples. This made Christianity the religion of the empire.

"The stroke which thus destroyed idolatry in the Roman empire is continual in its effects. . . .

"This smiting has been continued by all the

means which God in his providence and mercy has used for the dissemination of Christianity, from the time of Constantine to the present. . . . It is the kingdom which 'the God of heaven set up.' That this means the whole dispensation of the gospel, and the moral effects produced by it in the souls of men and in the world, needs little proof; for our Lord, referring to this and other prophecies in this book, calls its influence and his gospel the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven; showing thereby that it is a kingdom not of this world—not raised by human ambition, the lust of rule, or military conquest; but a spiritual kingdom, raised and maintained by the grace of God himself, in which he himself lives and rules, governing by his own laws, influencing and directing by his own spirit; producing, not wars and contentions, but 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.'

"This is called the kingdom of heaven, because it is a counterpart of the kingdom of glory. 'The kingdom of God,' says the apostle, 'is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. 14: 17). Righteousness, without any sin; peace, without inward disturbance; joy, without any mental unhappiness. An eternity

of righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy constitutes heaven; nor can we conceive in that state anything higher or more excellent than these.

"This kingdom shall never be destroyed; it is the everlasting gospel, and the work of the everlasting God. As it neither originates in nor is dependent on the passions of men, it can not be destroyed. All other governments, from the imperfection of their nature, contain in them the seeds of their own destruction. Kings die, ministers change, subjects are not permanent; new relations arise, and with them new measures, new passions, and new projects; and these produce political changes, and often political ruin. But this government, being the government of God, can not be affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed.

"This 'kingdom shall not be left to other people.' Every dispensation of God, prior to Christianity, supposed another by which it was to be succeeded. . . . Under the gospel, Christian is the name of the people of this kingdom. Everything in the construction of the Gospel system, as well as its own declarations, show that it is not to be succeeded by any other dispensation: Its name can never be changed.

. . . All former empires have changed, and the very names of the people have changed with them. The Assyrians were lost in the Chaldeans and Babylonians; the Babylonians were lost in the Medes; the Medes were lost in the Persians; the Persians in the Greeks; and the Greeks in the Syrians and Egyptians; these in the Romans; and the Romans in the Goths, and a variety of other nations. Nor does the name of those ancient governments, nor the people who lived under them, remain on the face of the earth in the present day! They are only found in the page of history. This spiritual kingdom shall never be transferred, and the name of its subjects shall never be changed.

"It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms; that is, the preaching and influence of Christianity shall destroy idolatry universally. They did so in the Roman empire, which was the epitome of all the rest. But this was not done by the sword nor by any secular influence. Christians wage no wars for the propagation of Christianity; for the religion of Christ breathes nothing but love to God, and peace and good-will to all mankind. The sum of the gospel is contained in these words of Christ: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life'; 'For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save.' . . .

"It is by his own spirit and energy that his kingdom is propagated and maintained in the world; and by the same his enemies are confounded. All false religions, as well as falsified and corrupted systems of Christianity, have had recourse to the sword, because they were conscious they had no God, no influence, but what was merely human.

"The kingdom of Christ breaks in pieces and consumes all other kingdoms; that is, it destroys everything in every earthly government where it is received, that is opposed to the glory of God and the peace and happiness of men, and yet in such a way as to leave all political governments unchanged. No law or principle in Christianity is directed against the political code of any country. . . . 'And it shall stand forever.' This is its final characteristic."

In Dan. 7:2-7, we read that Daniel saw in a night vision, four great beasts. The first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth was dreadful and terrible. It had great iron teeth. This vision

greatly troubled Daniel, so he asked an angel its meaning. The answer was: "These great beasts which are four, are four kings [kingdoms], which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (vs. 17, 18). Here are the same four universal kingdoms brought to view in the second chapter; namely, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome.

Now, mark you, immediately after speaking of these four kingdoms, he says, "and the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom." By this we are to understand that sometime during the reign of these four kings, the kingdom would be given to the saints of the Most High. As we have before observed, this was fulfilled during the reign of Rome, by the coming of Christ, and establishing his kingdom in the hearts of men. The saints are the people who have the kingdom of God set up in their hearts, who constitute the true church, that no lapse of time shall injure, and no power can destroy; but shall last as long as time shall endure.

Unlike the heathen kingdoms that preceded it, the kingdom of grace and righteousness pos-

sessed by the saints was to continue forever. Following the setting up of the everlasting kingdom, came the reign of the little horn and the great apostasy (vs. 19-21, 24, 25). During this long period the papal power prevailed against the saints and they were martyred by the millions. This was to continue until judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and this judgment, when executed, was to take away the dominion of the horn, to "consume and destroy it to the end" (v. 25). The "little horn" in Daniel 7 refers to the reign of popery. The abolishment of its dominion began with the Reformation of Protestantism and reached its grand climax in the restoration of the pure church in the evening light. "Consume," as it is here spoken of, evidently refers to the flaming judgments of truth given against false worship and false systems of religion. The fire of salvation and holiness has a consuming effect upon corrupt systems of religion. For example, the influence of Luther's and other reformers' preaching in the sixteenth century was as setting fire to the whole system of papal religion. "I will make my word in thy mouth fire and this people wood, and it shall devour them." Of course, we are not to understand this literally,

but figuratively such was the effect of the teaching of the Reformers. The power and dominion of Rome was largely taken away, and honest souls held within her deceptive fold were led out into the light.

As the judgments of truth that were executed in the morning of the Christian era are restored to the church, and God's people execute these against false systems of religion and false worshipers, the effect is the same upon these as the preaching of the Reformers was upon Rome. As honest souls accept the preaching of the pure gospel, they will be led to renounce the false and corrupt systems in which they have been held and will walk in clear light.

This consuming and destruction of false religions has been, and is, advancing, and the whole realm of sectarianism has to some extent felt its withering effect. In a deeper and broader sense will the whole realm of apostate religion be made to feel, in the future, the burning effects of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. Not only will apostate Christianity be effected, but as the pure gospel goes to all nations, false religions of every kind will lose their influence; and as people renounce these and accept Christianity, in this sense the dominion of false re-

ligions will be abolished. This blessed work will continue "until the end."

We have now reached the evening light—the restoration of the whole truth; and by this is comprehended full salvation from all sin and false religion, a pure church restored, and an enjoyment of all the rich blessings of the kingdom of Christ. "And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (v. 22). Thank God! we have reached that time.

In the morning light age, the kingdom of God, as we have seen, spread over the entire Roman empire, which was the only part of the world known at that time. Christianity conquered paganism within this domain. But after the great apostasy, when we reach the evening light age of the church and the saints again possess the kingdom, "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High" (v. 27). Yes, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him" (v. 14). In other words, in all the earth, in all nations where the gospel is destined to go, there will be found disciples of Jesus offering praise and honor and glory to his matchless

name. Here, then, we have the glorious triumph of Christianity set forth. It becomes universal. In this sense the church of God, the saints, the beloved city, shall have dominion under the whole heaven. Christ will have true disciples among all people, nations, and languages; and they shall serve him. This state of things shall continue until the end.

"No one now takes much interest in the history of the world before the coming of Christ. The old dynasties of Babylon, Media, Assyria, are but dim specters lost in the remoteness of the long-forgotten past. Though the Christian lingers with solemn pleasure over the faintly-revealed scenes of patriarchal life, still he feels but little personal interest in the gorgeous empires which rise and disappear before him in those remote times, in spectral visions, like the genii of an Arabian tale.

"Thebes, Palmyra, Nineveh—palatial mansions once lined their streets, and pride and opulence thronged their dwellings: but their ruins have faded away, their rocky sepulchers are swept clean by the winds of centuries; and none but a few antiquarians now care to know of their prosperity and adversity, of their pristine grandeur or their present decay.

"All this is changed since the coming of Christ. Eighteen centuries ago a babe was born in the stable of an inn, in the Roman province of Judea. The life of that babe has stamped a new impress upon the history of the world. When the child Jesus was born, all the then-known nations of the earth were in subjection to one government—that of Rome.

"The Atlantic Ocean was an unexplored sea, whose depths no mariner ever ventured to penetrate. The Indias had but a shadowy and almost fabulous existence. Rumor said, that over the wild, unexplored wastes of interior Asia, fierce tribes wandered, sweeping to and fro, like demons of darkness; and marvelous stories were told of their monstrous aspect and fiendlike ferocity.

"The Mediterranean Sea, then the largest body of water really known upon the globe, was but a Roman lake. It was the central portion of the Roman Empire. Around its shores were clustered the thronged provinces and the majestic cities which gave Rome celebrity above all previous dynasties, and which invested the empire of the Cæsars with fame that no modern kingdom, empire, or republic, has been able to eclipse.

"A few years before the birth of Christ, Julius Cæsar perished in the senate-chamber at Rome, pierced by the daggers of Brutus and other assassins. At the great victory of Pharsalia, Cæsar had struck down his only rival, Pompey, and had concentrated the power of the world in his single hand. His nephew, Octavius, the second Cæsar, surnamed Augustus, or the August, was, at the time Jesus was born, the monarch of the world. Notwithstanding a few nominal restraints, he was an absolute sovereign, without any constitutional checks. It is not too much to say that his power was unlimited. He could do what he pleased with the property, liberty, and the lives of every man, woman, and child of more than three hundred millions, composing the Roman Empire. Such power no mortal had ever swayed before. Such power no mortal will ever sway again. . . .

"Little did this Roman emperor imagine, as he sat enthroned in his gorgeous palace upon the Capitoline Hill, that a babe slumbering in a manger at Bethlehem, an obscure hamlet in the remote province of Syria, and whose infant wailings perhaps blended with the bleating of the goats or the lowing of the kine, was to estab-

lish an empire, before which all the power of the Cæsars was to dwindle into insignificance.

"But so it was. Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem, has become, beyond all others, whether philosophers, warriors, or kings, the most conspicuous being who ever trod this globe. Before the name of Jesus of Nazareth all others fade away. Uneducated, he has introduced principles which have overthrown the proudest system of ancient philosophy. By the utterance of a few words, all of which can be written on half a dozen pages, he has demolished all the pagan systems which pride and passion and power had then enthroned. The Roman gods and goddesses—Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Bacchus, Diana—have fled before the approach of the religion of Jesus, as fabled specters vanish before the dawn.

"Jesus, the 'Son of man' and 'Son of God,' has introduced a system of religion so comprehensive, that it is adapted to every conceivable situation in life; so simple, that the most unlearned, and even children, can comprehend it.

"This babe of Bethlehem, whose words were so few, whose brief life was so soon ended, and whose sacrificial death upon the cross was so wonderful, though dead, still lives and reigns

in this world—a monarch more influential than any other, or all other sovereigns upon the globe. His empire has advanced majestically, with ever-increasing power, down the path of eighteen centuries. . . .

"The Cæsars have perished, and their palaces are in ruins. The empire of Charlemagne has risen, like one of those gorgeous clouds we so often admire, brilliant with the radiance of the setting sun; and, like that cloud, it has vanished forever. Charles V has marshalled the armies of Europe around his throne, and has almost rivaled the Cæsars in the majesty of his sway; and, like a dream, the vision of his universal empire has fled.

"But the kingdom of Jesus has survived all these wrecks of empires. Without a palace or a court, without a bayonet or a saber, without any emoluments of rank or wealth or power offered by Jesus to his subjects, his kingdom has advanced steadily, resistlessly, increasing in strength every hour, crushing all opposition, triumphing over all time's changes; so that, at the present moment, the kingdom of Jesus is a stronger kingdom, more potent in all the *elements of influence* over the human heart, than all the other governments of earth.

"There is not a man upon this globe who would now lay down his life from love for any one of the numerous monarchs of Rome; but there are millions who would go joyfully to the dungeon or the stake from love for that Jesus who commenced his earthly career in the manger of a country inn, whose whole life was but a scene of poverty and suffering, and who finally perished upon the cross in the endurance of a cruel death with malefactors.

"As this child, from the period of whose birth time itself is now dated, was passing through the season of infancy and childhood, naval fleets swept the Mediterranean Sea, and Roman legions trampled bloodily over subjugated provinces. There were conflagrations of cities, ravages of fields, fierce battles, slaughter, misery, and death. Nearly all these events are now forgotten; but the name of Jesus of Nazareth grows more lustrous as the ages roll on."—*Abbott's History of Christianity.*

THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

The history of the world has been properly divided into distinct dispensations, or ages. The

time from Adam to Moses can properly be termed the Patriarchal age, the period before a written law was given; from Moses until Christ, the Mosaical age, or the dispensation of the law; and since Christ, the dispensation of the gospel, or the Christian era. Of course these dispensations can be subdivided into smaller or minor ages; as, the antedeluvian age, that is, the time before the flood, which Peter terms "the world that then was." The Mosaical age is sometimes spoken of as "the law and the prophets."

A careful study of events in the history of the church reveals four distinct epochs that are included in the Christian dispensation. The morning light age of the church; the age of apostasy and the reign of popery; the Protestant age of sectarianism and division; and the evening light age, which brings to us the restoration of the whole truth and the pure church of God.

With prophetic eye, the seers of old foretold a better day—a day of salvation. That which they enjoyed in type and shadow was to reach the substance and reality through Christ, who would usher in the most propitious age of grace and glory the world would ever see. Thus

Isaiah foretold it: "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee" (Isa. 49:8). After quoting this language of the prophet, Paul makes the application, "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). The Christian dispensation is preeminently the age of God's mercy and salvation to a lost world. It was ushered in by the coming of Messiah to save mankind, and its end will be when Christ is revealed from heaven to judge the world.

Since the beginning of time, one long age has followed another, in which God "at sundry times and in divers manners, in time past, spake unto the fathers by the prophets"; but in "these last days" he hath "spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1, 2). "These days," then, that make up the gospel age, are the "last." Yes, dear reader, these days in which you and I are now living are the last days of time. That another age of a thousand years will follow the present is by this text utterly refuted, for *there can be no days after the last.* Jude tells us that the great multitude of mockers and scoffers who have opposed Christianity during this gospel

age were to come in "the last time" (Jude 16-19).

Here is another proof that the current dispensation is the last. Time is a limited portion of duration, and since we are now living in the last time, we are living in the last measured portion of duration. Nothing remains after the close of the Christian era but eternity. The beloved apostle John knew this. He says, "Little children, it is the last time: . . . we know that it [the present age] is the last time" (1 John 2:18, 19). This text is decisive.

The millennium contention is that there are a thousand years of time to follow the gospel age. But these texts stand in direct contradiction to the millennium theory. Since the gospel dispensation is the last time, there can be no thousand years to follow it. Peter plainly states that Jesus was manifested in "these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:20). In the direct from the Greek this is rendered "last of the times." Again in Eph. 1:10 Paul denominates the present age, "the dispensation of the fulness of time." The great work of "gathering together in one all things in Christ," both Jews and Gentiles, all reconciled in one body by the cross, one family in heaven and in earth, was to

be accomplished "in the dispensation of the fulness of times"; and all this is effected through the gospel during the Christian era. So the current dispensation is the dispensation of the fulness of times, that is, the dispensation when time is full. You see, one long age has succeeded another until we have reached the last dispensation of time.

In 1 Cor. 10:7-11 Paul says that the lusting after evil things, idolatry, murmurings, etc., of the children of Israel, "are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"; "were written for our warning who live in the end of ages."—*Conybeare and Howson.* How solemn this declaration! Upon us in the present dispensation, the ends of the world have fallen; and we have approached almost two thousand years nearer that final end than the apostle lived; and here we stand on the very verge of eternity. Just a step before us lies the end of the world. Since we now live in "the end of the ages," there can be no thousand years age of time to follow this one. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:16, 17). The last days of this world

began with the present Holy Spirit dispensation. The last time is here, and salvation is now or never. In Heb. 9:26 it is clearly stated that Jesus appeared "in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "At the full end of the ages."—*Young's Translation.* "Completion of the ages."—*Emphatic Diaglott.* So the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world was at the beginning of the last dispensation, the full end of the ages, and nothing more but eternity is before us. So the present gospel age is the consummation of all time, the completion of all the ages allotted to this world. Hence the supposed millennium age is a delusion.

Now is the great day of salvation. Time and salvation will end with the present gospel era. Reader, let me impress this fact. As probation ends with time, and salvation with probation, and the inspired apostle declared that he knew this is the last time, it follows as an absolute certainty that right now, under the abounding grace of God, the human family is enjoying its last chance of salvation, and this world is moving through its last epoch of time. In the face of these facts, how weighty are the solemn words of the apostle as recorded in 1 Pet.

4:7—"The end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer." Jesus taught that when this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, "then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). Here again we see that with the closing of the gospel age comes the end of all things; that is, the end of salvation, of probation, and of this world. Paul, speaking of the resurrection of the dead at Christ's coming, says, "then cometh the end" (1 Cor. 15:20-24). "Cometh," is not in the original. "Then the end" is the correct rendering. When the seventh trumpet (elsewhere called the "trump of God," "last trump," etc., which shall call forth the dead, 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:16) shall sound, then there shall be "time no longer" (Rev. 10:4-7). If God's word be true, we are living in the full end of the ages, in the last time.

In the present dispensation we are the subjects of Time. With gigantic footsteps he bears us to our future. There is no escape from his course. Few are the human hearts so hardened but at some time or other they are melted into pity; but were the whole universe in tears over

the rapid sweep of Time, his silent course would not be stayed, nor his iron heart be moved. On, still on, he presses; but not forever. The period comes on apace when his own death knell shall ring. Swallowed up in eternity, his iron heart shall yet be melted to pity; yea, shall feel the sting of death. "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth forever and ever, . . . that there should be time no longer" (Rev. 10:5, 6). The iron barriers of the tombs which he has built shall be broken asunder, and the numberless dead shall gather the scattered fragments to build an eternal sepulcher to him who has laid so many in their last repose, but who shall then be wrapped in the unending sleep of eternity.

"THE TIME IS FULFILLED"

We have already shown in a previous chapter that the Old Testament prophecies point to the first advent of Christ as the time when the kingdom of heaven would be established. We shall now consider some plain New Testament scriptures that teach this fact.

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, *The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand*" (Mark 1:14, 15). This text is decisive. When Christ appeared and began his great ministry for the salvation of the world, the predictions of the Old Testament seers relative to the time of the establishment of the everlasting kingdom of God were fulfilled. Observe closely the language, "The time *is* fulfilled, the kingdom of God *is at hand*."

Millennium teachers place the establishment of the kingdom at Christ's second advent, but the above text refutes their theory and proves conclusively that the kingdom was established at the time of Christ's first coming. The dispensation of the glorious gospel of infinite mercy and manifestation of eternal truth by Jesus Christ was now to open fully to all mankind. This is the kingdom of heaven.

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). During John's ministry he preached saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Since the ministry of John "was the beginning of the gospel of Jesus

Christ" (see Mark 1:1), when the new order of things was introduced, the doors of the kingdom were even then thrown open and it is said that men "pressed into it." How could men press into a kingdom that was not to be established for two thousand years future? Preposterous. All these texts prove that the kingdom was then present. Both John and Jesus taught that this kingdom was at hand. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matt. 11:12). "Jesus said, And if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." What reasoning could be attached to such scriptures as these, were it not true that the kingdom of God had already appeared? "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou are not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12:34). According to the millennium theory, this man was about two thousand years away from the kingdom. But Jesus did not hold this theory, but held up and preached the kingdom of God as something to be received and entered now.

Do not overlook the fact that men actually "pressed into" the kingdom, therefore, the kingdom was set up in the days of our Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking of his disciples, Christ said, "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:27). "And he saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28). In the name of Jesus, we ask, In the face of such plain scriptures, who can teach that the establishing of God's kingdom is yet future?

But there was to be a definite time when the kingdom in its organic form, in all its glory and power was to come. Now mark the fact that Christ said to his disciples, "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God." We would be willing to stake this whole argument on these last three texts. If millennialism be true, the disciples are yet living

somewhere upon the earth. But the fact that they are all dead proves beyond question that the kingdom of God is already come. But when were these texts fulfilled? I answer, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2: 1-4). "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14: 17). "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but *in power*" (1 Cor. 4: 20). "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1: 8). This is too clear to need comment. Pentecost is the time referred to when the kingdom in all its glory—the New Testament church in its organic form—was fully established.

Paul testified to the Colossian brethren that God "hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1: 13). This was not a matter of expectation or anticipation of something to be received and enjoyed in a future

millennial age, but right now in this present world he instructed saved people to "walk worthy of God who *hath called you* unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). Thank God, this is a present experience. The very thing millennialists are looking for in a future age, the saints now enjoy in this last and best dispensation of time. The kingdom of God is here.

In fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy, the time has come when the saints possess the kingdom. "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). John testified that he was "*in the kingdom* and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). While Cerinthus, the millennium teacher, was advocating a future literal kingdom, which people could enter in an age to come, John positively declared that right now, in this present dispensation, he already was in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Peter denominates the church in this dispensation "a royal priesthood"; that is, a priesthood of kings (1 Pet. 2:9). "They which received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign *in life* by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17).

Many more scriptures could be brought forth, but we deem the foregoing sufficient to prove to any reasonable mind that the kingdom of God was fully set up and established by Christ in the beginning of the Christian era.

CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

In order to sustain their position, those who hold to the millennium theory claim that Christ is not now sitting on the throne of David in this dispensation; and that, therefore, there must be another age, a period of a thousand years, in which Christ will sit upon the throne of David. Some of them go so far as to say that the throne of David will be reestablished in Jerusalem, and that Christ will there reign over literal Israel, who, as a nation, will again be restored to their former glory. To the natural mind this may sound very beautiful, and it may appeal to some as very plausible; but a careful investigation of the truth of the Bible will clearly reveal that such theories are but mere speculations of human minds, and are not really found in Holy Writ.

In the first place, the literal throne of David

never can be reestablished, for it was destroyed centuries ago. By "throne" is meant sovereign power and dignity. Therefore, as David was exalted to this place of power and government in Israel, so the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the seed of David, was to be raised up and exalted to a state and place of sovereign power; a king to rule in righteousness. This is all that can be meant by Christ's sitting upon the throne of David. If it can be shown that Christ now, during the present dispensation, fills this place, that Christ now occupies the very place and position that the prophets foretold; then the millennial contention will be refuted.

Open your Bible to 2 Sam. 7: 12-16: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." If we find clear evidence that it is in this dispensation that Christ was to sit upon David's throne, then why look for another age in which to accomplish that which

is being fulfilled in the present one? Note the foregoing prophecy. It was God's promise to David. Primarily, it reached its fulfilment in Solomon, who sat upon David's throne; but in it is contained a clear reference to the government of the spiritual kingdom—the kingdom of the Messiah. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever." This refers to Christ and the spiritual kingdom he came to establish. The "house" in this prophecy refers both to the temple Solomon built at Jerusalem and to the church which Christ established; the church for this is declared to be "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Solomon's temple was a type of the New Testament church. The real burden of the entire prophecy reaches its glorious fulfilment in Christ.

Now, let the reader observe that at the very time this kingdom and throne of David was to be established forever, it was said of David himself, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." So instead of Christ's sitting on David's throne after the resurrection, as millennial teachers declare, this text proves that it was to take

place while David was still sleeping with his fathers. How beautifully this harmonizes with the New Testament declaration of Peter recorded in Acts 2:29, 30: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Here we have the application of God's promise to David. It referred to Christ and reached its fulfilment at the time of Christ's resurrection from the dead. David himself refers to this promise in Psa. 132:11: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." It is clear that the prophet was here speaking directly of Christ when he said "of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Paul writes, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1: 3, 4).

Instead of pointing to a future age for the fulfilment of these prophecies, the apostles clearly understood them already fulfilled in this dispensation; and certainly we are safe in accepting the apostle's interpretation rather than the fancied theories of men at this present time. The fulfilment of this scripture, as mentioned in the second chapter of Acts, clearly evinces the fact that in this dispensation Christ was to sit upon David's throne. We turn to Isa. 9: 5-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." This is an illustrative prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, with an enumeration of those characteristics in which he stands most nearly related to mankind as their Savior, and by which his infinite majesty and godhead are shown. He is called Wonderful; wonderful in his conception, birth, preaching, miracles, suf-

ferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; wonderful in his person, and wonderful in his working. He is the Counselor that expounds the law, shows its origin, nature, and claims. He ever appears in the presence of God for men. He is the mighty God—"God manifest in the flesh." The everlasting Father—the origin of all things, the cause of existence, the Father of the spirits of all flesh; the Prince of Peace. The government rests on his shoulder, and upon his throne in his kingdom, he executes judgment and justice; and the increase of his government and peace shall continue forever. To it there shall be no end.

But when should all be fulfilled? At the beginning of the Christian dispensation or at the beginning of a supposed millennial age? The answer is positive and clear. It was when a "child" was "born" unto us, when a "son" was "given." From this it is obvious that the reign of Jesus Christ on the throne of David began in the days of his incarnation. And this is settled beyond question by the angel's announcement to Mary, as recorded in Luke 1:31-33: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God, and, behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his

name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now do we have two dispensations presented in this prophecy? Not by any means. The birth of Christ, his name, his throne and reign, are all connected and must be in the same dispensation; that is, in the present one. This text refers to him as the everlasting head and sovereign of his church. His government and kingdom shall be eternal. Revolutions may destroy the kingdoms of the earth, but the powers of hell and death shall never be able to destroy the kingdom of Christ. His is the only dominion that shall never have an end. Here we have the glory, extent, and perpetuity of the evangelical kingdom.

All these scriptures clearly locate Christ's kingdom and reign as beginning at his first advent. It was when he was born into the world as a son that he became a king and established his kingdom. And this is identical with his sitting on the throne of David. Christ was "born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2). Note Nathaniel's greeting to Christ: "Thou art the

Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). At the time of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the whole multitude of disciples cried out, "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." This fulfilled the prophet's predictions—"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto thee." "Pilate asked Jesus, art thou the King of the Jews?" (Matt. 27:11). In reply, Jesus said, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (John 18:37). The Jews well understood that Christ claimed to be the king of Israel, for while hanging on the cross in the throes of death, the scribes and elders said, "He saved others, himself he can not save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:42). All these texts confirm the fact that Christ began his reign on the throne of David, during the days of his incarnation. Being born a king, and clothed with all the authority of heaven, he began to deliver and to execute the laws of his spiritual kingdom. His authority was supreme. The people were compelled to say, "Never man

spake like this man," and even his enemies admitted that "he spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But in a much greater and more comprehensive sense are these prophecies fulfilled since Christ has risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent forth the Holy Spirit as his personal representative on earth, to execute his law and to point out the way of full salvation he purchased on the cross.

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes

thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:29-36).

It would seem that this language is so clear that none could misunderstand it. Peter was preaching to the Jews, and assured them that the promise of God to David, sworn to, and confirmed by an oath, declared "that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," that this Jesus "hath God raised up," yea, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this Jesus whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." He is the supreme governor of all things, and all persons, Jews and Gentiles, angels and men.

David said that Christ would be put to death. He also foresaw that if Christ were not resurrected, he could not sit upon his throne forever. Since he came sitting upon the throne of David during his incarnation, he must be resurrected in order to continue upon the throne. The prophet "seeing this before, spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell—hades—neither did his flesh see corruption." Had his flesh seen corruption, then the

prophecy that Christ was to sit upon David's throne henceforth, even forever, would have been nullified; but as his body did not see corruption, he continued to reign upon the throne of David. You see, the apostle here quotes the language of David in Psa. 132:11, and he presents the same to us as being fulfilled at that time, which gives us positive proof that this dispensation is the one in which Christ would reign upon David's throne.

"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, harken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:13-17).

The visiting the Gentiles and the seeking a people out of them for his name, you will observe, was building the tabernacle of David; and the throne of David was in the tabernacle

of David. We then have Christ sitting upon David's throne in this dispensation, because it is in this dispensation that the Gentiles are chosen as the people for his name. "That the residue of men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord." Thus we find in the Old Testament declarations of this prophecy, and also in the explicit language in which the New Testament citation of its fulfilment is expressed, the clearest evidence that could be desired by any one, that *Christ now sits upon David's throne.*

I will call the reader's attention to another fact. A careful reading of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament shows that "David" is frequently a title for Christ. This being true, it follows that if Christ sits upon his throne, it must be David's throne. Since "throne" means sovereign power and dignity, Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, "when he raised him from the dead" clothed with "all power in heaven and in earth," and his sitting down at God's own right hand in the heavens, "crowned with glory and honor," "far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, both in heaven and on earth," he surely exercises greater and more universal sovereign

power than David ever exercised during his earthly reign over literal Israel.

The distinctions between nations disappeared at the cross. Since that time, literal Israel is no more the chosen people of God. While the law and its blessings were to one nation, the gospel is good tidings of great joy to all nations in all the world. Paul positively declares, in speaking with direct reference to Jews and Gentiles, that "there is no difference." "God is no respecter of persons," "but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The Jews as a nation are no longer more favored than the Gentiles. They have the same privileges in the gospel. Salvation is not a national affair, but an individual matter. Every man and every woman on earth is responsible themselves for their eternal destiny. So if the Jews will believe on Christ and accept him, individually, the veil will be taken from their hearts, and they will be "grafted in again," the same as the Gentiles. In the beginning of the Christian era, thousands of them did accept Christ, and the rest were blinded because of their unbelief. The Gentiles, as fast as they have accepted Christ and believed on his name, have been saved as

well as the Jews. It will continue thus until the end of time. Both Jews and Gentiles are placed on the same plane; both must come into Christ's kingdom by the door of repentance and faith; both must accept Christ individually, and all those who will not do this, both Jews and Gentiles, will be lost. Now, all who do accept Christ, from among both Jews and Gentiles, constitute the New Testament church, or kingdom.

Paul says that these children of Christ are the seed of Abraham, "heirs according to the promise"; "for if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed." This is the "*true Israel of God.*" In the Christian dispensation, the real and only seed of Abraham is the spiritual seed, the children of promise, those who are saved out of all nations through the blood of Jesus. This is the New Testament church. And since Christ is "head over all things to the church," its governor, lawmaker, and the king of saints, we see clearly how the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled during the Christian era, in that Christ now sits on the throne of David and reigns "the Prince of peace."

THE GREAT REDEMPTIVE REIGN

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 22-28).

In the above scriptures the following truths are clearly expressed:

First, There will be a universal resurrection of the dead; "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive."

Second, This resurrection will take place at the time of Christ's coming—"They that are Christ's *at his coming*." From Jesus' own lan-

guage in John 5:28, 29 we are sure that the final resurrection will be universal, including both they "that have done good" and "they that have done evil," and both will "come forth at the same hour," "at the last trump."

Third, With the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, comes *the end*—"Then the end"; that is, the end of time, the end of probation, the end of opportunity to obtain salvation, the end of this world.

Fourth, With the resurrection of the dead, the last enemy—death—shall be destroyed.

Fifth, Christ must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. From this we learn that Christ reigns while his enemies are being subjected, and not after their subjection. The last one to be destroyed will be death, and the destruction of this last enemy is accomplished by the general resurrection on the last day; for with the resurrection of the dead, death itself will be destroyed. This unmistakably proves that Christ's reign is before the resurrection, and not after it, as millennium teachers assert. This establishes the time of the great redemptive reign.

What is the nature of the reign of Christ spoken of in the text quoted from First Corin-

thians? A careful study of the subject shows that there are many interesting truths connected with Christ's reign, and one of them is brought out in the language of this head; namely, Christ's *redemptive* reign. For four thousand years, sin and death held sway over the entire human family. Satan robbed man of the "first dominion"; robbed him of his God-given privileges and right to have dominion over the earth and all it contains—the right to live upon the plane of God's own holiness and to enjoy the felicities of his divine approval. As a result of the fall, sin, death, misery, spiritual darkness, and woe, yea, all the train of suffering, sorrow, heartaches, and wickedness that has prevailed in all nations among all people down through the ages, was entailed upon the human family Satan, as usurper, became "prince of this world," "prince of the power of the air." He held the entire human family under his iron grasp; hence death reigned from Adam to Christ—spiritual death, which is the result of sin. Sin held dominion, and the law was too weak to deliver. At that time all were slaves under bondage; but in fulfilment of the many prophecies which pointed forward to a better day, a day of salvation and deliverance, when

the power of sin and hell would be broken and a "*KING*" would "reign in righteousness"—and the "Lord shall be king over all the earth"—Christ came "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). Being born a king, he set up his everlasting kingdom of righteousness, grace, and truth, in direct opposition to the kingdom of darkness, and the result was that hundreds and thousands of souls were delivered through the exercise of his almighty power.

God "anointed Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil." Christ loosed from the bond of her infirmity the woman whom Satan had bound eighteen years. Not only did he minister deliverance to thousands of those upon whom Satan had imposed bodily or physical infirmities, but many who were actually possessed of demons, who were under the control and power of the devil, Christ gloriously delivered. Devils crying with loud voices came out of many that were possessed of them. To the penitent sinner, Christ ministered salvation, saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." He ordained and sent

forth twelve apostles, and again seventy others also, with instruction to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases." The seventy returned saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:17, 18).

From this we see that Christ came to earth on a special mission, and that during his incarnation, or the time of his earthly ministry, he set up his kingdom, and began his reign of righteousness in direct opposition to the kingdom of Satan, sin, and darkness. The result was that Satan's kingdom began to tremble and fall. Jesus compared it to lightning falling from heaven; that is, as a flash of lightning falls from heaven, so he saw Satan fall and his kingdom vanish. Then to his disciples, with all authority, he says, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). This was the beginning of Christ's great redemptive reign.

Its object was to restore to man the very thing that Satan and sin had robbed him of in the beginning. But in order to complete this great work and make possible the salvation of a ruined world, it was necessary for Christ to go down into death and the grave, and then be resurrected triumphantly, breaking the bars of death asunder. Since then Christ has been vested, or clothed, with all power in heaven and in earth: power to fully save, sanctify, and redeem mankind from the last effects of the fall. By rising from the grave, Christ destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). Thus, man's redemption was sealed, and a multitude of captives were led forth to victory. The prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in that the prison doors were opened to them that were bound. Thus, as expressed in Christ's own language, was 'the prince of this world cast out.' Satan's power was broken, and Christ was raised up "a prince and a Savior." In other words, Satan was dethroned from the high place that he had usurped, and held for so many thousand years, and the everlasting kingdom of God in Jesus Christ triumphed.

From the record of the temptation in the wilderness, it appears that Satan foresaw this,

and therefore made a desperate attempt to thwart and hinder the real work and mission of Christ. He took Jesus up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Some have said that there was nothing to this; that Satan was only pretending; but I believe a careful investigation of the facts will reveal a depth of meaning here that it is well to consider. This was a *temptation.* Had Satan just been pretending, there certainly would not have been any temptation connected with this offer. My understanding of it is this: Satan, being the prince of this world, and holding that position so long, well knew that the time was approaching when his power, authority, and kingdom would be broken to pieces by the power and authority and kingdom Christ came to establish. He also knew that in order for Christ to accomplish his great work, he must suffer the ignominy of his own nation, be rejected by the rulers, and die the tragic death of the lowest criminal, the death of the cross. Now comes his tempting offer. It was virtually this: "I will simply give, or hand over, to you all that you came to accomplish,

and will save you the suffering and death through which you must pass; but I require one thing: fall down and worship me." This was a temptation, and had Christ yielded, Satan would have conquered, the whole plan of redemption would have been spoiled, and the world forever lost. Thank God, Christ conquered; he overcame that wicked one; therefore the salvation of the world was secured.

After his glorious resurrection from the dead, Christ ascended into heaven, "crowned with glory and honor," and took his seat at the right hand of God, upon a mediatorial throne. There he intercedes for the salvation of men and, through the Holy Spirit, executes the great salvation-work for which he died upon the cross. Having ascended into heaven, he shed forth the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when the Christian church as a separate, distinct institution, the visible, organic form of the kingdom of Christ on earth, was established and became a mighty working-force in the world. Thus, the first great enemies destroyed—subdued—in the redemptive reign of Christ, which began even during his earthly ministry, were sin, and spiritual death; and Satan himself, the prince of darkness, was conquered by the Lord.

At the time of the introduction of Christianity, a system of false religion was almost universal, and the world was held fast under its iron rule. It was paganism under the Roman government. Rome was the fourth universal kingdom that ruled the earth, and it was holding supreme power when Christ appeared to set up the everlasting kingdom of God. Rome's religion was purely heathen. As soon as the apostles went everywhere throughout the Roman kingdom preaching the gospel and planting Christian churches, Christianity incurred the hatred and opposition of this pagan system and its adherents. Thus a great conflict between pure primitive Christianity and paganism took place. This is brought to view in the book of symbols (Revelation).

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:

and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12: 1-11).

The kingdom of God on earth was represented

by the church of God, and it soon came into conflict with all the vile powers of heathenism enthroned in the Roman Empire. But the kingdom Christ established was destined to overthrow all the kingdoms of pagan darkness and to stand forever. It was that stone (Dan. 2: 31-35) which smote the iron kingdoms of paganism under the Roman power and broke them to pieces. In the above passage from Revelation, we have a woman clothed with the sun, which represents the early church, who is opposed by the great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns. This great dragon, which is easily identified by its heads and horns, symbolizes the Roman Empire under its pagan form. We notice that the church is set forth in a double symbol—a woman and her son—in order to show two phases of her existence during the great apostasy. The phase represented by the man child who was "caught up unto God, and to his throne" is that phase of the church which was cut off from the earth through martyrdom and persecution; while the phase represented by the woman who "fled into the wilderness" is that phase of the church which continued on earth, but was hidden by the great apostasy.

Next appears a great warfare between

Michael—Christ—and his angels, and the dragon. This represents the early conflict of Christianity with paganism. The result was: "The great dragon was cast out." Christianity triumphed over heathenism. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, *NOW* is come salvation and strength, and *the kingdom of our God*, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down . . . and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Here we have the glorious triumph of Christianity, during its primitive period, over the great systems of heathenism. And just such a triumph did take place, as all those who are acquainted with the pages of history know. While the pagans fought with sword and fagot and beasts of the earth, slaughtering thousands of the people of God, the Christians went forth to battle with no other weapon but the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. And, thank God, "they overcame." Those early Christians were consecrated, for "they loved not their lives unto the death." They gladly went to the chopping-block, to the amphitheater, to the stake; but they went testifying that the blood of Jesus

saves. And it is a historical fact that often with the literal slaughter of a few Christians, great numbers of heathen would be convicted and convinced of the truth, and turn to Christ. Then the time came when a decree went forth from the Emperor himself, that all the heathen temples should be destroyed and Christianity become the universal religion of the Empire. Thus in the progress of Christ's reign, one after another of his great enemies were defeated. This began to fulfil the Psalmist's prediction, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Millions in those primitive times were saved from sin, raised up to the real plane of holiness, and reigned in life through the abundant grace of God.

The next great antagonistic power to combat Christ's true kingdom is brought to view in Rev. 13: 1-10, also in Revelation 17. This was the papacy—a false and corrupt form of Christianity. But finally, after a long conflict which covered a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, in which thousands of saints were martyred, and the corrupt woman — apostate church—was "drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,"

the Lamb overcame this power, and she was made "desolate and naked." This, of course, refers to the fall of popedom which began under the great work of the Protestant reformers.

After this arises another power under the symbol of a two-horned beast (see Rev. 13:11-18). This is Protestantism, or the period of sectarianism and division. In a strict sense, the apostate condition of the church covers the whole period of the reign of popery and also Protestantism, for the Protestant sects are none other than the harlot daughters of the great mother-denomination—Rome (see Rev. 17:5). And all these are included in the great "MYSTERY BABYLON." But in Revelation 18 is foretold the time of a great reformation in the onward progress of the kingdom of God and Christ's redemptive reign, in which the downfall of this antagonistic babel of confusion is declared, and God's people are called out of her. Here we have the separation of the pure church from the whole realm and maze of apostasy, which is now being accomplished in the "evening light" age of the church. This pure redeemed church is brought to view in Rev. 15:2, 3: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the

beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Notice that this mighty host of redeemed saints have the "victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." Thank God, here we have the triumph of God's saints over false religions—the victory which is being enjoyed now in this blessed evening time. It will be further observed that this triumph gives honor to Christ and glory to his name, as the great "King of saints." This triumph of Christ's kingdom over the enemies of the church is further brought to view in Rev. 19: 1-8.

Next, we see the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gather together to make war against Christ and his mighty host (see Rev. 19: 19). These are gathered together by unclean spirits of devils. It is a gathering of the remnants of all the false religions of earth (Rev. 16: 13, 14). It is the final conflict before the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven,

called "the battle of that great day of God almighty." All this maze of false religion is seen under the figure, or symbol, of "Gog and Magog." These will compass "the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city," which represents the pure church in this evening time. The preparation for this great and final conflict is now going on, and already there is a confederation of the different false religions of earth against the pure church of God.

But He who never lost a battle, who is sitting at the right hand of God, until every enemy is made his footstool ("for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet"), shall triumph in this conflict also. For when the false religions are gathered together to strike one awful blow, fire will descend from heaven and devour them (see Rev. 20:9). This, to my mind, represents the coming of Jesus Christ "in flaming fire" in his second advent. The devil, as well as the advocates and adherents of every false religion of earth, will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). At this same time the universal resurrection of the dead will take place, which will destroy the last enemy—death.

When the last enemy shall be thus destroyed, this particular phase of Christ's reign will have

accomplished its purpose and will cease, for he will reign until every enemy is destroyed, which implies that when the last enemy—death—is destroyed, the redemptive reign will end.

But the redemptive reign of Christ has a two-fold purpose. Not only is it intended to destroy all the enemies and antagonistic powers of the church and kingdom, but to restore what was lost through the fall. Christ reigns upon a mediatorial throne for the salvation of a lost world. While the world lasts, Jesus as the Messiah and mediator, must reign. His is a kingdom of grace and salvation, and his reign during this dispensation is for the redemption of mankind. He is the world's advocate and Savior. In Acts 3:20, 21, we read that "He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Christ's kingdom was established to restore to man the very thing he lost through the fall.

The heavens will contain Christ until the last trump is sounded; then Christ will leave the mediatorial throne and take the judgment-seat, when the world will be left without an advocate,

without a Savior, without further opportunities of redemption. The numberless dead will all come forth, and the multitudes will be summoned before the great tribunal and stand before the great white throne. At this time "every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Satan, the prince of darkness, with his demons, together with all the host of apostates and rebels who closed their probationary state in rebellion against Christ's throne, will fall before him and acknowledge him the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." This will be the final great triumph. Then with an awful command, he will say to them on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire"; "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment," where they shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Then Christ will receive the innumerable company of redeemed saints who "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." These "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and after this meeting, he will present them to his Father as the harvest, the fruit, the success and accomplish-

ment, of his death and resurrection and great redemptive reign. This is the "restitution of all things." What God lost in the fall, through Satan and sin, Christ now restores as a result of his great mission and work. What a day of triumph! What an hour of rejoicing! From the hour Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit during his baptism in the Jordan and began preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, until the judgment scene is closed, the wicked punished, and the righteous rewarded, all things have been committed to the Son. The Father committed the work of redemption and even the work of final judgment to his Son Jesus Christ; but when this particular work which was committed to the Son is accomplished, Christ's reign, or this particular phase of it, ceases, and he delivers back the "kingdom to God, even the Father." The Son himself will be subject to the Father, who will reign "all in all" as from all eternity.

THE REIGN OF GOD'S SAINTS ON EARTH

Much has been written relative to a supposed reign of God's people here on the earth, but the

majority of the writers on this subject place this reign in a future millennium age. If it can be shown that the reign of God's saints on earth is a present experience during this dispensation of divine grace, then the millennial contention of a future reign on earth is false. It may surprize some of our readers when I state positively that the notion of resurrected saints reigning on earth a thousand years with Christ is positively without Scriptural support. A careful study of the texts used to support any such theory will show that they teach absolutely nothing of the kind.

That the Bible teaches a reign of God's people on earth, we do not deny; but instead of its being in a future age, thank God, it is the present experience of all those who are fully saved. This truth has already been introduced in the chapter entitled The Kingdom of Grace. We have proved that in this dispensation God's people are "in the kingdom of his dear Son" and possess its elements in their hearts—"righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost"; Jesus plainly taught, "the kingdom of God is within you," or, as some translators render it, "the reign of God is within you"; therefore, it is evident that identical with our induction into

the kingdom and possessing the kingdom in us, the reign of God's saints takes place. In fact it can not be otherwise. Possessing the kingdom and reigning through the grace of God is the same experience. Paul says, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21).

Dr. Clark says on this text: "As extensively, as deeply, as universally, as sin, whether implying the act of transgression, or the impure principle from which the act proceeds, or both—hath reigned, subjected the whole earth and all its inhabitants; the whole soul, and all its powers and faculties, unto death, temporal of the body, spiritual of the soul, and eternal of both; even so, as extensively, deeply, and universally, might grace reign, filling the whole earth, and pervading, purifying, and refining the whole soul; through righteousness, through this doctrine of free salvation, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the principle of holiness transfused through the soul by the Holy Ghost: unto eternal life, the proper object of an immortal spirit's hope, the only sphere where the human intellect can rest, and be happy in the place and state where God is; where he is seen as he is; and

where he can be enjoyed without interruption in an eternal progression of knowledge and beatitude: by Jesus Christ our Lord, as the cause of our salvation, the means by which it is communicated, and the source whence it springs. Thus we find that the salvation from sin here, is as extensive and complete as the guilt and contamination of sin; death is conquered, hell disappointed, the devil confounded, and sin totally destroyed. Here is glorying, 'unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.' Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Amen and Amen."

This exegesis beautifully presents the truth concerning the reign of God's grace in the human soul, the result of which enables us, through God's abundant favor and the possession of his own holiness, to reign triumphant in this life. "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). Death is here represented as reigning over mankind; but, thank God, those who receive the

abundant grace offered by Jesus Christ are redeemed from the empire of death and are exalted to sit in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" and reign in life. Reigning in life is the consequence of receiving the grace of God and the gift of righteousness. This is a present experience. Yes, dear reader, this reign is now, "*in life,*" and not deferred to a supposed future and fancied millennial age.

In Rev. 5:9, 10, we have brought to view, in the very opening of the plan of redemption by Christ, the blood-washed throng who are praising Christ by saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Here we have the Christian church composed of people of all nations, saved and redeemed through the blood of Jesus, which has made its members kings and priests unto God; and the result of this is that they shall reign on the earth. This does not refer to some future reign on the earth, but describes the reign of righteousness enjoyed by the people of God at the very beginning of, and

throughout, the gospel dispensation. They were already kings and priests unto God. In Rotherham's Translation, this text is rendered, "And didst make them, to our God, a kingdom and priests; *and they reign on the earth.*" This gives the correct meaning. It is now that the saints are a kingdom of priests and reign on the earth. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and *hath made us kings* and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5, 6). This is a present experience of the people of God, and it begins at the time when he "washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Peter thus describes the church in this dispensation: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood [kingly priesthood; that is, a priesthood of kings], an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). The very things that many people are looking for and expecting to enjoy in some fancied age yet to

come, it is the privilege of God's people to enjoy at this present time. John in writing to the churches of Asia in the first century of Christian grace declared that Jesus Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Right in harmony with this, John testifies of himself, that he was "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). God's church in this dispensation is a priesthood of kings, who, through the grace and righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, "reign *in life.*" Hallelujah! All who live in sin are slaves to their own lusts, are not able to govern themselves; but salvation makes us "kings" in ruling over our own selves, over our own passions, appetites, and desires. Paul says, "I keep under my body." "He that ruleth his spirit [is greater] than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). Salvation places us in kingly triumph over all the elements of the world—over sin, fashion, and popular sentiment. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4). And not only this, but, thank God, right now in this dispensation we reign over Satan himself, who claims to be ruler of the earth: "Behold, I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19).

We have something better than the millennialists are even looking for in their fancied age to come. They expect to reign over Satan when, as they say, he will be cast into a great pit and bound with a mighty chain, so that he can not harm any one: that certainly would be a very easy thing and nothing to boast of. Thank God, we have something better than that; right now, while Satan is loose, going about as a roaring lion, "seeking whom he may devour," we have power over him, yea, reign over him. In the name of Jesus Christ every demon in hell is subject to the saints of God. We reign over sin. Sin held the whole human family under its dominion for thousands of years, but now, in the Christian era "sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Yes, we reign over sin. The truly saved now possess the very things that formalists are looking for in the future. "Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness" (Rom. 6:22). A master of the situation of life, with a peace that nothing disturbs—this is now realized in the kingdom of God. Well hath the poet said:

"One we hail as King immortal,
He did earth and hell subdue;
And bequeathing us his glory,
We are kings anointed too.

"Shall we, then, by sin be humbled?
Must we yield to any foe?
No, by heaven's gift we're reigning
Over all this world below.

"Oh, what grace and high promotion,
That in Jesus I should be
Raised from sin to royal honor,
Even reigning, Lord, with thee!

"All this life is blissful sunshine,
Earth is subject at our feet;
Heaven pours its richest blessings
Round our throne of love complete.

"I am reigning, sweetly reigning,
Far above this world of strife;
In my blessed, loving Savior,
I am reigning in this life."

TWO PERIODS OF REIGNING PROPHESIED

In order to fully understand the kingdom of God, in all its phases, it will be necessary to note the perpetuity of the reign of God's people as portrayed in prophecy and revelation. The everlasting kingdom of God, established by Je-

sus Christ, is not altogether confined to this earth. The kingdom of grace here and the kingdom of glory above form the endless government of Christ and reign of God's people. This reign begins the moment an individual is saved through the blood of the Lamb, and will continue to all eternity; for of God's saints it is said, "They shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5). Therefore, in reality, if the reign of God's saints on earth ceased for a time, during the apostasy, it continued right on without interruption by that mighty host in paradise, who formed a part of the same church and kingdom. This truth will be clearly brought out in this and the following chapter.

The triumph of primitive Christianity is portrayed in prophecy as a glorious reign of the saints on earth. As already seen in Daniel, the stone "smote the great image upon his feet that were of iron, and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors" (Dan. 2:34, 35). This was interpreted by Daniel as follows: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom

shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44). Here we have clearly set forth the triumph of Christ's kingdom and the victory enjoyed by God's saints in the beginning of the Christian era; a triumph over paganism and all the systems of false religions then extant. This phase of the kingdom is identical with the church of God; a visible working-force in the world. And in this organic form, the kingdom of God shone forth gloriously in the morning of this dispensation. The entire church was declared to be "a royal priesthood," or a priesthood of kings. They were kings and priests unto God, and did reign on the earth.

In the preceding chapter, we beheld a glorious triumph in the great conflict between Christianity and paganism under the Roman government, as portrayed in the symbols given in Revelation 12. The triumphant host of God's people cried with a loud voice, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down." "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." This was

a reign of holiness through the abundant grace of God.

This great rejoicing of the early church was because "the accuser of the brethren which accused them . . . day and night," "was cast down." Whenever famine, pestilence, or any other calamity befell the pagans, they blamed the Christians. If a fire broke out in their city, the responsibility was laid on the Christians, and they were slaughtered by the thousand. No wonder there was a shout of joy when that power was broken.

I quote from Butler's Ecclesiastical History, p. 40: "The final victory of Christianity over Heathenism and Judaism, and the Mightiest Empire of the Ancient World, a victory gained without physical force, by the moral power of patience and perseverance, of faith and love, is one of the sublimest spectacles of history, and one of the strongest evidences of the divinity and indestructible life of our holy religion."

Tertullian, who wrote about the end of the second century, says in his Apology, "We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you [the Pagans]—cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, sen-

ate, and forum. We leave to you your temples alone. We can count your armies: our numbers in a single province will be greater. We have it in our power, without arms and without rebellion, to fight against you with the weapon of a simple divorce. We can leave you to wage your wars alone. If such a multitude should withdraw into some remote corner of the world, you would doubtless tremble at your own solitude, and ask, 'Of whom are we the governors?' . . . . Your cruelty avails you nothing. . . . The oftener you mow us down, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. What you call our obstinacy is an instructor. For who that sees it does not inquire for what we suffer? Who that inquires does not embrace our doctrines? Who that embraces them is not ready to give his blood for the fullness of God's grace?"

The mighty host of redeemed saints who constituted the church in her pristine glory were possessors of true holiness, raised up to heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This triumphant reign is expressed by the apostle Paul as follows: "Now thanks be unto God, which *always* causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14); "Nay, in all these things we are *more than con-*

querors, through him that loved us" (Rom. 8: 37); "And now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6: 22). This experience of entire freedom from sin and the possession of God's own holiness, gave to the primitive saints victory over heathenism, over Satan himself, over all sin and iniquity, over the flesh, and over the world. It was a glorious triumph enjoyed by the mighty host who were thus redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ.

But at a very early date the truth of God was largely lost sight of. The primitive glory began to fade, and holiness was lost by the church. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary" (Isa. 63: 18). The "little while" in which God's people were to possess true holiness was the early morning of the Christian era. Had the church always retained holiness, there would never have been an apostasy; but by descending from this lofty plane, she opened the way for every species of false doctrine and error. The result was that the enemies of truth trod down the sanctuary—the

church. These were the very false teachers that Jesus said would come. "Her priests polluted the sanctuary," and the result was, "a filthy and polluted" city (Zeph. 3:1-4).

D'Aubigne, in his History of the Reformation, says, "The living church retiring gradually within the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary hearts, an external church was substituted in its place." God made his church in the beginning "a praise in the earth"; or, as the apostle says, "to the praise of the glory of his grace." But by the coming in of the great apostasy, the church was robbed of her glory, and a dead, external, counterfeit church was substituted. The great beast power of apostate churches and man-rule exercised dominion, and the kingdom of God, as represented in the organic form of the Christian church, was crushed under human rule and power. Thus the reign of God's saints on earth, in this particular sense, largely ceased.

Daniel foretold this time thus: "I beheld, and the same horn [popery] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (Dan. 7:21). But thank God, this condition of affairs was not always to continue. In the seventh chapter of Daniel it is clearly shown that the

reign of God's people on earth is divided into two distinct periods. Here is recorded a vision of four great beasts symbolizing the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires. Verse 18 connected with Dan. 2:31-44 (already given in this chapter) shows that the saints were to possess the kingdom of God before the overthrow of these four kingdoms, which was fulfilled, as we have seen, by the establishment of Christianity by Christ during the reign of the Roman Empire.

Then follows a description of the rise of the papacy which was to "wear out the saints of the Most High" for a period of twelve hundred and sixty years (vs. 19, 25). During this period the public reign of the saints on earth largely ceases. But it was foreseen that the time would come when "judgment was given to the saints of the Most High," and "the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (v. 22). "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it *unto the end.* And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve

and obey him" (vs. 26, 27). This does not refer to the final judgment; but is a spiritual judgment that commences before that time and continues "*unto the end.*" This work, no doubt, began in the spiritual reformations during the Protestant era, when, from time to time, judgment was executed against the beast power which had for ages "worn out the saints of the Most High."

Since the time the Reformation began, the resurrecting grace of God has been in action, and thousands and millions have been raised up from a sinful state to life in Christ. With the restoration of the pure church of God in all its primitive glory in the evening light of this dispensation, judgment is going forth against all the false religions of earth. Holiness is restored and possessed by the saints the same as in primitive times. Thus the reign of God's saints on earth is restored. It was after the reign of the little horn (popery), and the great apostasy, that the saints possessed the kingdom, even "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven."

Thank God, we have reached that time! As seen in the preceding chapter, this reign of God's saints in the evening of the gospel dis-

pensation is clearly portrayed in Rev. 15:2, 3. The entire host of saints stands upon the sea of glass, with victory over the beast, his image, and the number of his name, a victory which signifies triumph over all false and corrupt religions of earth. With the restoration of pure holiness, God's saints are again enabled to reign *in life* right here upon earth. So at both the beginning and the end of the great apostasy there is a glorious reign of righteousness and holiness enjoyed by the saints on earth.

THE THOUSAND YEARS' REIGN WITH CHRIST

In Revelation 12, the church is set forth under the double symbol of a woman and her son, in order to show two phases of her existence during the apostasy. It will be seen that the woman brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; let us consider this woman as presented in the symbol.

She represents the church of God, the bride of Christ, in her primitive unity and purity. The blessed union which exists between Christ and his people is expressed by the term "mar-

riage." This is true both of our present spiritual union with Christ and of our future, eternal union with him. The whole church is in Scripture termed "the Lamb's wife," "the bride of Christ," etc. She was "clothed with the sun" —a striking emblem of Jesus Christ, the "Sun of righteousness," the light and glory of the church. The church was clothed with his righteousness, which is represented in the same apocalypse by "pure linen, clean and white" (Rev. 19:8). She was clothed with his holiness, with the beautiful garments of salvation. The result was that she was a pure church.

"And upon her head a crown." Ah! she sat a queen. Her husband, the glorious Lord, is the king of heaven—"King of kings, and Lord of lords." He ascended on high, "crowned with glory and honor," and now reigns a monarch over earth and sky. His wife—the church—shares this royal honor. With the same glory that the Father crowned him, he crowned her. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." She shares his reign in the kingdom of peace. He testifies, "I have overcome the world"; and we read that "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world."

The twelve stars in her crown represent the

twelve apostles of the Lamb. These adorn her fair brow. Her travail in birth and pain to be delivered represent the earnest labor of the early church for the salvation of the world. Like a true wife, the church joined heart and soul with Christ in the great cause which drew him to earth. The whole church is a unit, made up of "workers together with God" in the salvation of lost souls. Both "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

It is said "she brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." The question before us is, What does this man-child represent? Some have supposed that it refers to Christ; but for the following reasons it can not: The woman here referred to is the New Testament church. The church labors and pains to be delivered and suddenly brings forth this child. Christ is not a child of the church of God. She is not his mother. Really, he is her founder, her husband. The prophet calls him "the everlasting Father." Since this child can not refer to Christ, we shall clearly prove that it refers to the great and mighty host of children brought forth by the pristine church.

This man-child is clearly defined in the prophecy of Isaiah as follows: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all we that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isa. 66:7-13).

The man-child portrayed in Isaiah's prophecy is the same man-child seen in Revelation 12. Isaiah and Revelation both declare this to be

"a nation born at once," "in one day." "She [Zion] was delivered of a man-child." In surprize the prophet exclaims: "Who hath heard of such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." This is clear. A nation of children, born suddenly, constitutes the man-child. He was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This child 'sucks the breast of her consolations, and milks out, and is delighted with the abundance of her glory'; 'is borne upon her sides, and dandled upon her knees.' To what does this refer but to new-born babes, who desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2)? Paul said to some of these "babes in Christ," "I have fed you with milk" (1 Cor. 3:1-3). Was not this fulfilled in the early church? While Zion was in travail in an upper room in Jerusalem, she suddenly brought forth, and a nation of three thousand children was born into the family in one day. In a few days the number of children increased to about ten thousand. It was but a little while till the number increased to hundreds of thousands.

It will be observed in Eph. 2: 15 that the host of Jews and Gentiles born into the church of God, made one in his blood, and reconciled unto God in one body, constitute "*one new man.*" It may be objected that this child was to rule the nations. This is the same as Daniel prophesied, namely: "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. 7: 27). And in Rev. 2: 26, 27, it is said, "He that overcometh . . . to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4). This represents the glorious triumph of the early church. The breaking of the nations into shivers and the ruling of them with a rod of iron, is the same as the stone of Daniel 2 breaking in pieces and consuming the brass, iron, silver, and gold, until no place is found for them. It was the iron rod of the gospel that broke them in pieces. In Rev. 12: 17 reference is made to the "remnant of the woman's seed," which proves that the man-child was not a single personage.

Next is seen a "great red dragon, having

seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads," standing before the woman to "devour her child as soon as it was born." How true was the fulfilment! This dragon represented pagan Rome, and just as fast as men accepted the Christian faith, the pagans were ready to devour them. Such were the bloody days of the church under the heathen Roman Empire. But Christianity spread so rapidly and the gospel had such a crushing effect that paganism finally tottered and fell.

But what became of that holy nation, the triumphant throng, and great host of saints who were marching onward victorious over every foe? They suddenly disappeared from the earth. "The child was caught up unto God, and to his throne"—ascended to paradise—while darkness, superstition, and iniquity flooded the earth. The brilliant light of Christianity was eclipsed by the darkness of apostasy. "The woman fled into the wilderness." Here the reader will see the wisdom and necessity of a double symbol, a woman and her son, which was chosen to set forth two phases of the church.

In Revelation 17, a double symbol; namely, a vile woman and her daughters, is chosen to

symbolize two distinct phases of the apostasy. So with the church. If but a single symbol were used, how could the church thereby be represented as continuing on earth and fleeing into the wilderness, and at the same time be represented as overcome, persecuted to death, and caught up unto God, and to his throne?

The phase represented by the man-child, who was caught up unto God, is that phase of the church which was cut off from the earth through martyrdom and persecution. The phase represented by the woman who fled into the wilderness is that phase of the church which continued on earth but was hidden in the great apostasy. This part in the wilderness was crushed under human authority. The beast's power ruled, and this was the period when the reign of God's people on earth largely ceased.

Now, for a few moments, we shall drop that phase of the church which went into the wilderness of apostasy, and follow the man-child, or mighty host of martyrs who were caught up unto paradise. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the

beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20: 4, 5).

Notice, that it was the "*souls*" of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus that reigned with Christ. These were disembodied spirits that had had part in the first resurrection. This first resurrection is not a literal one, but is a resurrection, by the power of God, from a dead state in sin to life in Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of this in his Ephesian letter: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . and hath raised us up together"; also, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." To this John adds his beautiful testimony—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3: 14). The expression "the first resurrection," of Revelation 20, may have a specific or local meaning created by the context, referring to the exaltation of the martyrs—those who were slain for Christ's sake

were caught up to God and to his throne. These souls had taken part in the spiritual resurrection while they were on earth and were blessed and holy—had been raised up to the high plane of holiness—and because of their trueness to God they "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," after which they ascended into paradise, where we see them reigning with Christ. Not a word is said about people's being literally resurrected and reigning on the earth. This reign was before the resurrection of the literal dead, for the resurrection of these does not take place until after the one thousand years, and it includes both good and bad; for some are found written in the book of life and some are not (see vs. 11, 15).

It is clearly evident that there is no reign on earth mentioned here at all; the reign was with Christ. This beautifully harmonizes with Paul's statement, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:23, 24).

These same souls are brought to view in Rev. 6:9-11, and here it will be clearly seen that they were not literally resurrected and were not reigning on the earth at all. "And when he had

opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them: and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." In these texts, we again see the same persons symbolized by the man-child of chapter 12. They were souls in a disembodied state. They were not on the earth, but they were in a state of "rest" with Christ. These scriptures considered together blend harmoniously. First, the church reigns publicly on the earth, but this phase is cut off, by the apostasy on the one hand and by the persecutions of the beast on the other; and being thus interrupted on the earth, the scene suddenly changes to the realm of paradise, and we behold the souls of martyrs reigning there. They "rest" while they "reign with Christ," and they "wait" for the end of that earthly reign of tyranny and usurpation in

which their "fellow servants also and their brethren" shall be killed as they were.

The special time which this reign in paradise brings to our view is that period during which God's people on earth were martyred for the testimony of Jesus. At the end of this period, as we have already noticed, the scene is again laid upon earth, and the triumph of the church and the spiritual reign of the kingdom is again manifested. But as the public reign of the apostolic church ceased gradually, and as its restoration in the last days also takes place gradually, no exact dates for this phase of the subject can be given; therefore, the indefinite period of time that elapsed between the two is simply stated by the term, "a thousand years." This is not literally a thousand years, for that would be less than the reign of the papacy, which was twelve hundred and sixty years; moreover, the period under consideration not only covers that period, but also extends into the Protestant era; for Protestantism also martyred some of God's witnesses during its earlier days. In fact, all the time periods mentioned in the Revelation are symbolic, not literal. If a literal period of a thousand years had been meant, the prediction would probably have said a thousand days; just

as the twelve hundred and sixty years was symbolic by "a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

First, we see a glorious reign on earth in the beginning of the Christian era. Next, the long reign of apostasy, when the public reign of God's people on earth ceases. But during that long period, symbolicly termed a thousand years, the reign goes on in paradise, by the souls of those who had taken part in the great spiritual resurrection, and had reigned on earth, millions of whom were martyred for the witness of Jesus and the testimony which they held. Thus the scene of reigning was for this long period of time transferred from earth to heaven; but at the end of this time the saints again possess the kingdom: and in the closing days of the Christian dispensation, God's people enjoy a reign of righteousness on earth again. The idea is not that those souls in paradise reign merely a thousand years, for they shall reign forever and ever; but the truth intended is that during the great apostasy, the time when the beast and image would reign on earth and have the dominion, the endless reign of Christ in his saints would go on uninterrupted. How fittingly the language of Dr. Clark, already quoted, applies

on this particular point: "The kingdom of grace here, and the kingdom of glory above, form the endless government of Christ."

DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE KINGDOM EXPLAINED

In order to obtain a correct understanding of the teachings of the Bible relative to the kingdom of heaven, it is necessary to understand it as set forth in its different phases. Most all Bible truth is set forth by different figures, and if it were not for the direction and guidings of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures would certainly present a mass of incomprehensible enigmas.

Christ is represented by the figure of a "lamb" and a "lion," two very opposite natures. His mission was to bring "peace on earth," and yet he says, "I am not come to bring peace, but rather division." In Isa. 2:4 it is said of his kingdom, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." "And neither shall they learn war any more"; while in Joel 3:10, speaking of the same kingdom, it is said, "Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears."

"Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near" (v. 9).

These directly opposite statements, when properly understood, simply present different phases in the nature of the Lord's work. So with the general teaching relative to the kingdom of God. When properly understood there is no confliction, but beautiful harmony throughout. For example: In many texts it is said that the kingdom which Christ was to establish would be an "everlasting kingdom." "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Then in 1 Corinthians 15 it is said that following the resurrection and general judgment "Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father." The first have direct reference to the endless reign of Christ and the saints, which began during Christ's personal ministry on earth in the salvation of men and women from sin in the present kingdom of grace on earth, and will be continued in the eternal kingdom of glory above. For in this sense the kingdom of grace here—present—and the kingdom of glory above—future—form the endless government of Christ and the endless reign of his saints. The latter text has direct reference to that phase of the

kingdom which refers exclusively to Christ's redemptive reign for the salvation of a lost world; therefore, there is no confliction between these texts.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is a doctrine. The entire message of the gospel is "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 8:12). "The kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16). "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60). Many other similar texts could be given which show that the kingdom of God is expressed by the gospel in such a manner that the preaching of the gospel is said to be the preaching of the kingdom of God.

The work of salvation in the human heart is in many scriptures called the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. I will give but a few texts out of many. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). "The kingdom of God is preached and every man *presseth into it*" (Luke 16:16). "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, *the kingdom of God is within you*" (Luke 17:20, 21). It was in this sense that John testified that he was "in the kingdom

and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). And Paul declared (Col. 1:13) that the Lord "hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us *into the kingdom of his dear Son.*" And again, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but *righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. 14:17).

Of course, this phase of the kingdom is invisible because it is the internal work of the Holy Spirit and "cometh not with observation." But in speaking of that phase of the kingdom which is identical with the church of God as a visible working-force in the world, which was fully organized and established on the day of Pentecost, and there dedicated by a most wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christ said to his apostles, "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they *see the kingdom* of God" (Luke 9:27). "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have *seen the kingdom of God come with power*" (Mark 9:1). Here a distinct phase of the kingdom is brought out; namely, its identity with the visible organization of the New Testament church: and when thus understood, it will be easily seen that

there is no confliction between those texts which speak of it as invisible and those which speak of it as a visible working-force.

In speaking of Christ's kingdom and reign relative to the work of grace and salvation through the gospel, to be accomplished in the hearts of men during his incarnation on earth; and even from the days of John the Baptist, when the gospel of the kingdom began to be preached; it is said that people *entered in* and enjoyed the blessings and favors of the kingdom of heaven.

But there is another distinct phase that must be understood in order to harmonize all the facts. This is the universal phase. It would appear from Heb. 2:9 that when Christ ascended into heaven, he was then "crowned with glory and honor." Not only crowned a king to reign in the hearts of his people here on earth, but crowned "King of kings and Lord of lords." "Prince of the kings of the earth." Christ is now universal King—Lord of heaven and earth. Peter in describing this universal phase of Christ's reign and kingdom, says, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22). Paul speaks

of this universal phase of the kingdom in the following language: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things" (Eph. 1:20-22).

From this we see that the whole earth and universe is his kingdom. Therefore all sinners and evil men are now in his (universal) kingdom, but they exist as rebels against his throne, dominion, and authority. But this condition of things will not always continue. Christ will not always endure in his universal kingdom those who rebel against his law. Therefore at his second coming, "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:41-43). This has reference to the final day of judgment, when the wicked will be banished

forever from the universe of God's dwelling, and the whole domain of God will be occupied by the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and "all dominions shall serve and obey him." Then the righteous shall have an abundant entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11).

It is with reference to this universal phase of Christ's kingdom that Jesus spoke the parable recorded in Luke 19:12-27. Here, "a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom." Certain ones hated him saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." After a time the nobleman returned, having received the kingdom, and he then rewarded the faithful and punished the rebels. The application of the parable is as follows: Christ ascended into heaven—the far country; there he received the kingdom, or there was given to him glory and dominion and power over all heaven and earth. His faithful servants on earth are the saved, or the church of God. Those who said "we will not have him to reign over us" are the ungodly who rebel against his authority and throne. His coming will be the second advent and the great day of judgment,

at which time he will reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

Thus, we might go through all the different phases of the kingdom as presented in the Scriptures and find that when they are properly understood there is a beautiful harmony throughout, and that the very texts relied upon by millennial teachers for a future literal kingdom simply refer to some distinct phase of the glorious kingdom of Christ, established and in existence during the Christian dispensation.

THE LION AND THE LAMB SHALL FEED TOGETHER

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of

the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9). "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" (Isa. 65:25).

These texts are used by many as descriptive of the happy state of things during the supposed millennium. It is believed that there will be a literal fulfilment of the prophet's picture here given. Some with whom I have conversed say that the fire spoken of in Second Peter will burn over all the earth, consuming its works and all the present state of things, restoring it back to the Edenic state. After this the millennium will take place, at which time all the wild animals will be tame and the prophet's prediction will literally come true. I asked one of these teachers what would become of the animals while the judgment fires were sweeping over the earth, burning up everything therein. I stated that either the animals must be burned up and afterwards resurrected, or else they must be translated and held somewhere in mid-heaven until after the purifying and consuming fire had swept over the earth. He replied, "Well, the Lord can do either." Such betrays the utter

blindness of men, and the desperate straits they are driven to, when they endeavor to uphold a wrong doctrine.

A careful study of Isaiah 11 clearly shows that the first advent of Christ and the blessings of his kingdom during the Christian era are referred to. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." This refers to the coming of Messiah, who was "the root and offspring of David." Verses 1-5 refer directly to Messiah and his work. Then follows the foregoing language concerning the animals (vs. 6-9). And in verse 10 we read, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." In Rom. 15: 12 Paul quotes this identical prophecy and applies it to the Christian dispensation. It refers to the Gentiles' seeking Christ and entering into his rest.

In foretelling the work of Messiah and the blessings of his kingdom during the Christian dispensation, the prophets with one accord employed figurative language. The various animals are used in the Word of God to represent different characters of men. For example; Jesus

said to his disciples, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." To Peter he said, "Feed my lambs." Concerning Herod, he said, "Go ye, and tell that fox" (Luke 13:32). False teachers are compared to "ravenous wolves" and "grievous wolves" (Matt. 7:15, Acts 20:29). Paul said, "Beware of dogs" (Phil. 3:2). Speaking of the characters of the damned, it is said, "Without are dogs" (Rev. 22:15). Hypocritical professors are called "serpents" and "generation of vipers." In Matthew 25, God's people are called "sheep," and the unsaved "goats." So in Ezekiel 34 God's people are compared to "sheep," "fat cattle," etc. This is the sense in which we are to understand Isa. 11:6-9 and Isa. 65:25. It teaches how the grace of God in this glorious dispensation would destroy the serpent-like, devouring natures of men, and make the most lion-hearted sinners, the most ferocious characters, docile and harmless; even so meek that a "little child" can teach and lead them. It also teaches the glorious love and unity that exists among the redeemed in God's kingdom, where there is no wrangling, backbiting, deceit, or devouring one another; but peace which nothing offends, and where all are helpers of each

other's joy, workers together. And the prophet adds: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." Instead of this state of things existing in the literal, natural world, it is a description of the happy condition of the people of God in his holy mount; and this mountain is none other than the church of God. All in this fold are harmless as doves. In the 35th chapter of Isaiah the prophet, speaking of the highway of holiness upon which the redeemed in this gospel dispensation were to walk, says, "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there" (vs. 8, 9).

It is very clear that the animals were used to represent the beastly natures of men, which are destroyed in holiness; and also that no ferocious character is on the way to heaven. Surely literal wild animals can not walk on a spiritual way, the road to heaven, which is the highway of holiness. Here again we see that the very things people expect to realize in some future time are now realized and enjoyed by the saints in light.

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE AN INFANT OF DAYS

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20).

The basis for a correct understanding of this peculiar text lies in the context—in the general setting in which it is placed. The last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah are a most remarkable production, constituting a grand Messianic poem in which the complete character, work, and career of the Son of God are set forth in his three-fold office as prophet, priest, and king. While the design of this prophecy is to show the propitious nature of God's plan of salvation, the result of neglecting it is set forth in a twice-repeated strain—"There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked" (Chaps. 48:22; 57:21); and at the close, in more terrible words—"Where their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (66:24); thus dividing the Messianic poem into three equal cantos, or sections. In the very center of the middle

canto (chap. 53) we find the *vicarious atonement of Christ* as the grand center around which all else radiates. This is the central theme both of prophecy and of history.

Clustered around this central point we find many other glories, chief of which is the prosperity of Zion, the church of the living God. But the *language* of this prophecy, being written in the legal dispensation, is based entirely on the conditions, practises, customs, and institutions of that age, and is evidently intended merely to set forth, by way of comparison, certain facts and truths in the analagous department of the church—God's true people. There is no mistaking the time of the fulfilment of these things, for it begins with the appearing of God's "righteous Servant" and continues ever afterward. The rebelliousness and hardheartedness of literal Israel, and their rejection by God in order to make way for the introduction of the heavenly message to the Gentiles, are clearly described, even in the chapter containing the special verse now under consideration (see Isa. 65: 1, 2), and is thus quoted and applied by the apostle Paul in Rom. 10: 20, 21, thus establishing the point of *time*, fixing it in the gospel dispensation.

Now, literal Israel was the people of God, and when they were obedient God gave them abundant prosperity in a natural way; therefore the actual description of this literal prosperity is given to represent in a figurative sense the spiritual prosperity of Zion. I will prove this statement by briefly referring to a few of the evidences only. Chapter 59 closes with the first coming of Christ as the Redeemer, and chapter 60 opens with this coming described as a great light which should lighten the Gentiles, as a result of which God's people should constitute "the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (v. 14). This is spiritual, we know, and belongs to the gospel dispensation. But notice the immediate description given by the prophet—"For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (vs. 17, 18). The church does not possess in a literal sense gold, iron, brass, walls, and gates, but the language itself is significant, and its meaning evident.

Then chapter 61 opens with the words, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." This scripture Christ read in the synagogue at Nazareth, and then said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (see Luke 4: 16-21). This Person, then, does not appear in some fancied millennial age, but has already come.

Let us continue the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the work which he should perform. "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness . . . *and they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.* And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God: and ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast your-

selves" (vs. 3-6). It is evident that this scripture, together with the following chapter, sets forth the spiritual prosperity of the followers of Christ in the gospel dispensation, though the phraseology and symbolism is that of the prosperous Israelites after their return to their own land.

Now notice how this language corresponds with the special text we are considering, and its context. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. *And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.* They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; *for as the days of a tree are the days of my people*, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Chap. 65: 20-22).

But the spiritual welfare of the New Testament church not only corresponds to the abundant prosperity of literal Israel, but it exceeds this. The salvation of Jesus so alters the natures and conditions of men that the church is in all spiritual respects paradise restored,

therefore this happy and marvelous change is here represented by the prophet as a "new heavens and a new earth," saying, "Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem [the New Testament church] a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (v. 18). Before the flood, when men lived nearly one thousand years, the person who died at the age of one hundred was supposed to die in his youth; in fact, he was probably regarded as cut off in his youth as a punishment for sin. But God's people have in a spiritual sense the prosperity of a new earth—"as the days of a tree are the days of my people" (v. 22). The "tree" probably refers to the oak, which oft times lives for a thousand years. "Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord" (vs. 22, 23).

This is not a literal description to meet a fulfilment in some future age, for in the future world the people of God shall not die at all—either at the age of one hundred or one thousand years. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given

in marriage: *neither can they die any more:* for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, *being the children of the resurrection*" (Luke 20:35, 36).

So we see that the language of the prophet can not refer to a condition of mankind after the resurrection; and it is beyond the resurrection, during the supposed millennium, that this text has been generally applied. The reader must remember that in prophecy, literal things are generally used to teach spiritual truths. This is the general rule throughout the books of prophecy and Revelation. To place literal interpretations upon the prophecies in general is to miss the truth, and those who do so, fail to grasp the mind of inspiration and fall into gross errors. A careful reading of the many applications of the Old Testament prophecies made by the apostles in the New Testament will show that, though spoken in language that would appear to have a literal signification and application to Israel after the flesh, they are entirely spiritual in their nature and refer to the accomplishments of the gospel during the Christian era.

So in the text under consideration. A day in the courts of the Lord are worth a thousand in

the realm of sin. The righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree. "With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation." In this connection, it is well to mention that there will be a real new heaven and new earth brought to view in the future. This will be the eternal home of the redeemed. The church on earth being the visible form of the kingdom of heaven, and being so closely associated with heaven itself, frequently we find the same terms applied to each.

THE DESERT SHALL BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE

Another beautiful figure under which the glories of Messiah's kingdom was foretold, is found in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. "Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you" (v. 4). This refers to "God manifest in the flesh," in the person of Jesus Christ, who brought salvation to a lost world. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and

streams in the desert" (vs. 5, 6). All this was fulfilled during the personal ministry of Christ, for the Gospels record a history of just such accomplishments as are here predicted. The eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, the lame were made to walk, and the dumb were made to sing. Nor did this cease when Christ ascended into heaven; but it was continued under the labors of the apostles: and, thank God, we are glad to say that in these last days there are thousands who can testify that all contained in this prophecy has been fulfilled. Yea, our eyes have witnessed the very things herein foretold. So we are living in the dispensation of time when the good things predicted in Isaiah 35 reach their fulfilment.

In vs. 8-10 we have a beautiful picture of the highway of holiness lifted up through the gospel, and the happy state of those who are now "redeemed" through the blood of Christ. These are termed "the ransomed of the Lord." Zion is their dwelling-place, and "everlasting joy" their portion. This expresses the state and condition of those who now enjoy full salvation. There is no reference here to a future age, because all these things are now fully provided

for through the atonement of Christ, and enjoyed through the abundant grace of God.

Right in connection with the things afore mentioned, the prophet said: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing" (vs. 1, 2). "And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes" (v. 7). This language is highly figurative. The soul of the unsaved is compared to parched ground and a desert, a thirsty land.

By reference to Jer. 17: 5-8, which is a parallel scripture to the above, it will be seen that the human heart is meant, instead of the literal deserts of this earth. "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: For he shall be

as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Here we see that those who depart from the Lord and live in sin are like "the heath in the desert," and inhabit parched places in the wilderness. A better figure could not be employed to denote the desolate state of the unsaved. But when such seek the Lord and turn away from their sins, then is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah as recorded in the forty-first chapter, seventeenth and eighteenth verses—"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water."

In Psa. 63:1 we have this striking picture of a soul seeking God for full salvation: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." The reader can at once see that instead of

making a literal application of these texts, they are to be interpreted in a highly spiritual sense. The wilderness, solitary place, and desert, simply represent the cheerless, wretched, and barren state of the ungodly. Such are said to inhabit a dry land where no water is. This represents the thirstings and longings of the soul that the pleasures, riches, and honors of this world can not satisfy. Millions all about us are famishing, thirsting, and dying for want of the living waters; and yet, salvation, like a spring of cool, sparkling, refreshing water, has been provided for every human soul. The invitation is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isa. 55:1).

Jesus points to himself as the fountain of life. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). All are invited; no one excluded. "Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Yes, salvation's waters quench all the thirstings of the human heart and fully satisfy. Listen to the announcement, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6). This means there is a great abundance. Hear Christ again, "But

whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life" (John 4: 14). Here are the springs of water that were to spring forth as "streams in the desert."

Again, we hear the evangelistic prophet breaking forth with new inspiration as he foretold the glories of the Christian dispensation. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12: 3). And again, "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drouth, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58: 11). Thank God, these texts locate the desert condition and the watered garden condition in the human soul. This is not a millennial dream, but a glorious, present reality. While we pen these lines our soul is made to drink of the river of his pleasures, and of that stream whose waters "make glad the city of God." Through salvation, the sterile, desolate soul is made to bring forth like a watered garden and to blossom as the rose. The fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and

faith, are borne in great abundance in the lives of God's people. Through the grace of God we are enabled to "bring forth much fruit," to the glory of God. The Christian "is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." He stands in the midst of a sinful and wicked world as an oasis in the desert. Surrounded by all the desolation and havoc that sin has wrought, he lives like a fruitful vine laden with the ripe clusters of the sweet graces of the kingdom of heaven. In his heart and life there blooms the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley.

O friend, instead of sitting idly by, dreaming of a fancied millennial age that will never come, embrace the present privileges and blessings of the kingdom of God, and yours shall be a happy life, here and in the kingdom of glory beyond.

THE NATIONS SHALL LEARN WAR NO MORE

In Isa. 2:2-4 will be found another picture of the reign of Messiah and his kingdom. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the

mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Two distinct phases of Christ's kingdom are brought out in many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, as well as in the clear teachings of the New, and in the Revelation.

We see one phase of Christ as a conqueror, riding forth as a mighty warrior, followed by the armies of heaven, and in every conflict he vanquishes all his foes. Thus, he is seen going forth against the hosts of hell and darkness "conquering and to conquer." With direct reference to this distinct phase of the accomplishments of the kingdom of heaven, the prophet Joel speaks

thus: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong."

But in the prophecy of Isaiah quoted at the beginning of this chapter and a parallel one in Micah 4, we have Christ's kingdom described from an entirely different point of view—the peaceful reign of righteousness—and Christ is seen as the "Prince of Peace." The reader will observe that all contained in this prophecy was to "come to pass in the last days." Wherever the last days are mentioned in Scripture, the days of Messiah are always meant. In Heb. 1:1, 2, we have the last days located: God "hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son." The Christian dispensation constitutes the last days of this world's career. Hence we are now living in the time when Isaiah's prophecy was to reach its fulfilment.

The mountain of the Lord's house, also termed the mountain of the Lord, the house of the God of Jacob, is none other than the New Testament church. Paul said to the Hebrew brethren, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God," which he de-

nominates "the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." It is in this dispensation that the saints in light dwell in the mountain of God's holiness, and this constitutes the Christian church. "And all nations shall flow unto it." This clearly refers to the accomplishments of the gospel during the current age. Under the law, the true God was known to Israel only, but the gospel privileges are extended to all nations. Literal Zion was the dwelling-place of the Jews. Spiritual Zion is the abode of the saved of all nations; for "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." By reference to Luke 24: 47, it will be seen that this is now fulfilled in "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Christ himself applied the prophecy thus: "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

Now, in connection with this, and among the things that were to come to pass in these last days, the prophet added, "They shall beat their

swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Some have thought that this refers to a time of universal peace among the literal nations of earth; and they conclude that since the nations in the present order of things, are in a general state of unrest and war, spending great sums of money in preparation for such conflicts, and perfecting their armies and building formidable destroyers and dreadnoughts, etc., that another age must follow the present one when these predictions of universal peace will be fully realized. The fact is, that the ideal state of society as set forth in these prophecies of the Old Testament does not refer to the political conditions of the world, but rather to the peaceful condition and state of the kingdom of God. There is nothing that can effect universal peace except universal righteousness. Such pictures as the prophet here gives were not intended to describe the condition of the temporal, political kingdoms of earth, but the happy state of that "holy nation" gathered out from all the nations and peoples and kingdoms of the earth—the saints who dwell in Zion. It is descriptive of the glorious peace and unity

which exists among the saved of all nations who are gathered into the blessed kingdom of God.

This perfectly harmonizes with the angel's prediction that Christ's first coming would bring 'peace on earth and good-will toward men.' In the kingdom of grace, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and in fact between all nations of men, is broken down, and through salvation they are brought into one family, where their hearts are knit together in love. And perfect peace reigns in mount Zion. No more wrangling or quarreling, for war is forever destroyed, and nothing but peace reigns in the hearts of the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in this dispensation. In Micah 4: 17 we have the place of this peaceful reign clearly located: "And the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even forever."

Through the grace and truth of God, the saved of all nations are brought into one fold; belong to but one church, the church of God; are all of one heart and one soul; one mind; all speak the same things; all have one faith, one spirit; all strive together, rejoice together, assemble together, and see eye to eye. God over all, in all, and through them all, knits their

hearts together in love. Surely the prophet did not overdraw the picture of this.

Instead of sitting idly by, dreaming of the literal fulfilment of these predictions in an age that will never come, the saints of the most High *are now* enjoying the fulfilment of these blessed truths. D. S. Warner said, "About all the false doctrines in the world today can be summed up under two headings: Some other way but Christ; some other time but now."

THE BINDING AND LOOSING OF THE DRAGON

Throughout the Book of Revelation there are three great religious powers brought to view. These are symbolized by "the dragon," "the beast," and his "image," or the false prophet. The pagan power is symbolized by the dragon; the papal is symbolized by the beast, and the Protestant is symbolized by the image, or false prophet.

The first mention of the dragon is in Revelation 12. Here we have "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." He has a tail with which he drew the third part of the stars of

heaven and cast them to the earth. In the same chapter, the Christian church is brought to view under the symbol of a woman and her child. It will be seen that "the dragon was wroth with the woman" and "persecuted" her and "made war with the remnant of her seed." A great conflict took place between Michael and his angels, and this great dragon and his angels; but the dragon was defeated, and as a result of this defeat, a loud voice was heard saying, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." This shows that the conflict was between Christ and the dragon. Some expositors have supposed that this dragon is the devil; but it must take a great stretch of imagination to believe that Beelzebub is a monster dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and a tail with which he drags after him the stars of heaven. It seems some people forget that this is a book of symbols and that the language of Revelation is highly figurative. This dragon would properly symbolize a tyrannical persecuting government. It was a "red dragon," which carries the idea of blood-thirstiness and cruelty.

It is very easy to identify this dragon by his heads and horns. It will be seen that this dragon

had his crowns upon his heads. In the following chapter, we read that John saw a beast rising up out of the sea with the same number of heads and horns, but ten crowns on his horns; and the dragon gave him (the beast) "his power, and his seat, and great authority." So far as the heads and horns are concerned, the only difference between the two is that the crowns—a symbol of supreme authority and power—had been transferred from the heads to the horns. In Revelation 17, John saw the same beast again, and there it is said of the seven heads "there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (v. 10). Concerning the horns he was told, "The horns which thou seest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet" (v. 12). With this explanation it will be easy to identify the dragon of chapter 12 and the beast of chapters 13 and 17 as the Roman Empire; the first under the pagan, and the second under the papal, form. The seven heads represent the seven supreme forms of government which the Roman Empire had, which were as follows: The Regal power, the Dictatorship, the Decemvirate, the Consular, the Triumvirate, the Imperial, and the

Patriciate. The ten horns of the dragon represent the ten kingdoms which grew out of the Roman Empire during its decline and fall. The casting-down of the stars doubtless refers to the bright luminaries who were martyred during the reign of paganism. Just as fast as men accepted the Christian faith the pagans were ready to devour them. Such were the bloody days of the church under pagan Rome.

The appellations "old serpent, devil, and Satan," applied to the dragon, must be understood figuratively. Paganism could well be called "the devil," because its religion was purely of the devil. Paul says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils; ye can not drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils" (1 Cor. 10: 20, 21). Paganism is called Satan, a Hebrew word signifying an adversary, from its great opposition to and its persecution of the Christian church. It is also called "that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world," from its subtlety against the Christians, and its causing the whole Roman world, as far as was in its power, to embrace the absurdities of paganism. At the ushering in of the Gospel dispensation,

paganism was the universal religion. From a careful reading of the conflicts of the early Christians with this dragon power, one would be almost led to believe that paganism under the Roman government was Satan incarnate. It was through this system that the devil worked his greatest opposition against Christianity. It is a fact that the early Christians called the pagan power the devil, and they rightly named it; for it was the principle agent through which the devil deceived the world and opposed the church of God in primitive days.

There is but one dragon mentioned in the Revelation. In chapter 12, where he first appears, he is described as *a* great red dragon, and in every subsequent place where he is referred to, he is spoken of as *the* dragon, showing that it is the same dragon. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit; and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be ful-

filled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20: 1-3).

This scripture, no doubt, has been more speculated upon than any other in the Bible. It is used as a foundation for all the multiplied absurdities and diversities of false doctrines respecting a fancied millennial future. In fact, many in their blind zeal will set aside the plain testimony of the New Testament scriptures, and literalize this text. It is certainly a very unsafe mode of interpretation to found a theory upon the metaphorical and symbolical language of scriptures, and then try to bend all the plain, simple declarations of truth to harmonize with such a theory. Any one can see at a glance that the safe and right way is to place such interpretations upon the highly figurative language of scriptures as will perfectly harmonize with the plain, simple teaching of scripture elsewhere. Almost everybody admits that the remainder of the Revelation is highly figurative, but when they come to Revelation 20, they insist upon a literal interpretation. Rev. 20: 1-9 is as highly symbolical as that of Revelation 9th, 12th, 13th, and, in fact, the greater part of the entire book.

The prophecies of the Revelation are laid out

in parallel series, each covering the Christian dispensation. There are almost a dozen of such series in the book. One theme is taken up and carried through until the end, and then the narrative returns to take up another theme or a different phase of the same theme covering the same ground and terminating at the same point. The last verse of Revelation 19 ends one series of prophecy, showing the overthrow of certain evil powers in the lake of fire. Then chapter 20 begins a new series of prophecy covering the gospel dispensation likewise, and ending at the same point, the lake of fire (v. 15). Note this point carefully. The leading events of this chapter take place before the second coming of Christ and the judgment scene, and not afterwards (vs. 11-15). All the events from verses 1 to 9 lead up to the time when the corrupt powers of earth will be cast into the lake of fire; then follows the great judgment scene, when the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished (vs. 11-15). So the events of Rev. 20:1-9 must preceed the second coming of Christ and the general judgment, instead of following it, as many people have believed. Notice also, that this particular character of Revelation 20 is designated "*the* dragon." This

clearly shows that the object has already been introduced. So the dragon of Revelation 20 and that of Revelation 12 is identical. Observe how closely Rev. 20: 1-3 agrees with Revelation 12. A careful comparison makes clear that we have here two parallel series covering in some respects two separate phases of thought, and yet each sustain and explain the other. The dragon in both chapters, being identical, signifies the great corrupt system of paganism which for centuries deceived the nations—the whole world.

In chapter 12 we have brought to view the great conflict between primitive Christianity and heathenism under the symbol of Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon and his angels. The power of Christ prevailed, and the Christians overcame the dragon. In Revelation 20, an angel came from heaven, bound the dragon, and hurled him from the lofty position which he held to the great abyss from which he emanated. When this power ruled the earth, and its religion was universal; when almost the entire then-known world was under the deceptive influence of this huge system of error; Christianity, like an angel from heaven, appeared on the scene, and, with the great chain of gospel

truth, she bound and completely overthrew this public system of pagan infidelity. The chain in her hand is a symbol of the power to bind, and this was surely effected through the Gospel.

"When Christianity first commenced its warfare with this huge system of error, almost the entire then-known world was under its deceptive influence; but by a long conflict, in which thousands of the noble followers of the Lamb were slaughtered, this anti-Christian public system of pagan infidelity was at last completely overthrown; and the final result was, that the civilized world became as completely Christian (nominally, at least) as it ever had been pagan. This great transformation could never have been effected without the undying heroism and whole-hearted consecration of the first disciples of Christ. From this time the dragon *as such*—as a public deceiver of the nations throughout the apocalyptic earth—was overthrown. This marks the beginning of the thousand years mentioned.

"Since many of the principles of heathenism were copied by the Church of Rome, it may be difficult for some to understand at first why it is said that the dragon no longer deceived the nations after being cast down by primitive

Christianity; but this becomes clear when we consider what the dragon really was, and what the Church of Rome was understood to be. A time came when the entire civilized world knew that heathenism *as such* was wrong, and rejected the very idea of a plurality of gods; but they were led to believe that they could adapt many of their former rights and ceremonies to the worship of the one true God in whom they believed and thereby render acceptable service to him, and were sure that the Romish church was the one true apostolic church. It was not the dragon, or heathenism, that then deceived them; it was Christianity—*a false Christianity.*" The manner in which the people were deceived during the time following the casting-down of heathenism in the beginning is brought to view in Revelation 13 and 17. The entire reign of the great apostasy of the Christian era covers the same period included in the one thousand years mentioned in this vision before us.

"We can not apply this period specified as literally one thousand years without varying from every principle of time prophecy in the Revelation, for they are all symbolic; neither can we apply it according to the usual year-day method, which, signifying three hundred

and sixty thousand years, would throw this series of events out of harmony with the time periods alloted to the other themes of truth, running over the same ground and terminating at the same point—the general judgment. Therefore, to be consistent, we shall have to apply it as (so far as human knowledge of the exact dates is concerned) an indefinite length of time, on the same principle that 'the hour of temptation' in chap. 3: 10, the 'three and one half days' in chap. 11: 9, and the 'hour' in which the ten kingdoms received power with the beast (chap. 17: 12), etc., are applied."

As verses 4-6 have already been explained in previous chapters, we will here make but brief reference to the same. I will insert the following exegesis of these three verses from The Revelation Explained, by F. G. Smith.

"We have in this description another division of the subject introduced—a history of God's people, or one phase of the church, during the same thousand years following the casting down of the dragon. 'They lived and reigned with Christ.' It was those who had 'part in the first resurrection' that were exalted to this honored position with Christ. Millenarians always *assume* that this refers to a literal resur-

rection at the second coming of Christ, but no such thing is hinted at. Not one word is said about literally resurrected saints reigning. John says, 'I saw the *souls* of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . and *they* lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' Nothing whatever is said about any reign on earth at all; but the description shows plainly that it was disembodied spirits that were reigning with Christ in paradise during the period that followed the casting down of the dragon, which was in reality one of long apostasy and darkness on earth. Before and during this conflict with paganism, the church of God was publicly triumphant on earth. Afterward, during the apostasy, a false church was, in the public view, triumphant, while the church of God was crowded out of sight into the wilderness. However, the reign of God's saints did not cease; for when they were slaughtered by their relentless persecutors and deprived of their reign on earth, they were, as symbolized by the man-child, caught up to God and to his throne and there 'lived and reigned with Christ' during the thousand years under consideration.

"This same thought concerning the reign of the martyrs in paradise while the powers of

evil triumphed on earth, was brought to view on the opening of the fifth seal in chap. 6:9-11: 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the *souls of them that were slain* for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that *should be killed as they were* should be fulfilled.' This quotation will make clear one point concerning the refusal of the martyrs to worship the beast and his image. We are not to understand that every soul of the martyrs John saw in these visions reigned during the entire period under consideration; but he beheld the reign of the saints above during the one thousand years, and he saw there the souls of all the martyrs—such as had been slain in the early days of Christianity (chap. 12:11); such as refused to worship the beast and were martyred therefor (chap. 13:7); and also, such as 'should be killed as they were' (chap. 6:11) and were put to death shortly after the

formation of the image of the beast (chap. 13: 15; 16:6).

"This company of souls that the apostle saw reigning with Christ above were those who had had part 'in the first resurrection,' which had made them 'blessed and holy.' They were not on earth; they were disembodied spirits above, hence had not been literally resurrected. The Scriptures clearly teach that mankind in their ordinary condition are '*dead* in trespasses and in sins,' and that through salvation, which makes them 'blessed and holy,' they are 'quickened' to a new life in Christ (Eph. 2:1). That this is Scripturally 'the first resurrection,' is proved most positively by the words of Christ—'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, *and now is*, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear *shall live.* He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed from death unto life*' (John 5:25, 24). Although many other proofs could easily be given, this of itself is sufficient to establish the point that the host of early Christians who had 'passed from death unto life' in Christ and who gave their lives gladly for the sake of Christ, constituted

the ones referred to as having had 'part in the first resurrection.' According to verse 6 it was only on those who had part in the first resurrection that the second death had no power. The church at Smyrna received the sure promise from Christ himself that they should 'not be hurt of the second death' (chap. 2:11); and this shows beyond all question that even at that early date they had had part in this first resurrection that makes men blessed and holy.

"It is the trick of Beelzebub to deceive souls by causing them to overlook the fact that this first resurrection that made men blessed and holy is of a spiritual nature and to fix their hopes in two literal resurrections at the end. There will be but one literal resurrection then, as is clearly shown by the account given of the judgment in this chapter (vs. 11-15). The writer of the Revelation declared positively, 'Behold, he cometh with clouds: and *every eye* shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him' (chap. 1:7). If this does not prove that there is but one literal resurrection when Christ comes, then I would not know how to state such a fact if I desired. Furthermore, Jesus himself, in the same chapter in which he

described 'the first resurrection,' says most positively that all the literal dead shall be resurrected at the same time. 'Marvel not at this,' he says; 'the *hour* is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation' (John 5:28, 29). This *hour* certainly can not signify more than a short period of time."

"It is evident that 'the first resurrection' as applied in this connection specified particularly that phase of the church which, as symbolized by the man-child, was caught up to God through martyrdom and there 'lived and reigned with Christ.' The other phase of the church, symbolized by the woman, is not said to reign with Christ a thousand years, but, on the other hand, is represented as driven into the wilderness, her public reign on earth being ended by the holy city being trodden under foot of a profane multitude of apostate beast-worshipers; and the two witnesses, clothed in sackcloth were prophesying only in a few isolated, individual hearts.

"A careful study of this scripture, taken in connection with others in the Revelation applying to the same object, will show that all God's

people, both those here brought to view during the thousand years and those following that period, are spoken of as dead people resurrected and reigning. They are considered under two phases—those who, as symbolized by the man-child, were caught up to God through martyrdom and there lived and reigned with Christ; and those who, as symbolized by the woman, were deprived of their public reign on earth and were driven into the wilderness during the same period. The first phase were 'priests of God and of Christ' and reigned with him in paradise (chap. 6:9-11); but 'the rest,' the phase symbolized by the woman, did not live and enjoy their public reign again, as in the early days of Christianity, until the expiration of the thousand-year period. It is true that individuals on earth received life from God and were thus spiritually resurrected during the thousand-year period; but the dominant beast power martyred them by thousands, the two witnesses were then in their sackcloth state, and thus the public triumphal reign of the saints on earth ceased. The statement of verse 5 that 'the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished' should be applied not in an individual, but in a general sense, the same as

the reign above during the same period is considered. There is also some doubt as to the authenticity of this sentence. It is not found in the Vatican Manuscript, which is one of the oldest in existence; and the Syriac Version, which has come down to us from early days through an entirely separate channel, does not contain it. However, it is evident that the phase of the church symbolized by the woman actually reigns triumphantly on earth after the thousand years is finished; for verses 7-9 of this chapter show that the dragon, combined with Gog and Magog, goes forth on the breadth of the earth to compass 'the camp of the saints just before the end of time.'

"It is only reasonable to suppose that the public reign on earth would commence gradually and would finally reach its perfect fulfilment, just the same as it ceased gradually in the beginning. Therefore we can not point to a definite date exactly marking the end of the thousand years, any more than we can locate exactly the time of its commencement; but we must be satisfied just to consider this symbolic expression as covering a long period of time during which these important phases of deep

truth are considered merely from a general standpoint.

"This special reign of a thousand years above is doubtless brought to our view for the express purpose of making the history of the triumph of Christianity continuous. When interrupted on earth, the scene is suddenly transferred to paradise; then when the woman comes out of the wilderness, and the public reign on earth begins again, while the woman is being prepared as a bride for the coming of the Lamb, the scene, as the following description in verse 9 also will show, is again transferred to earth. The reign above does not in reality cease with the expiration of the thousand years, but we are permitted to obtain a view of it only for that length of time during the down-trodden state of the church on earth. This reign of martyrs above is placed in direct contrast with the public reign on earth during the same time, which consisted of multitudes of people worshiping the beast, receiving his image and his mark. What the 'thrones' on which they sat and the 'judgment' given them signifies, I do not know for certain, but it is doubtless the same exalted privilege and authority which Christ promised

to all his overcomers—to sit with him on his throne (chap. 3:21)."—*Pp. 391-398.*

We now come to consider the loosing of the dragon. It is said that after the expiration of a thousand years "he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:3). And when he is loosed, he "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them" (vs. 8, 9). The events in the closing years of this dispensation will doubtless be very similar to those in the beginning. History will repeat itself. Back in the morning light age of the church, Christianity opposed every false religion. This was unavoidable, for in its very principles it stands opposed to every false way. As Christianity spread principally throughout the pagan Roman Empire, its effects were mostly felt there. As will be the case in these last days, the pagan systems of religion went crashing to pieces before the onslaughts of Christianity. Back there this was confined to Rome, while in this eve-

ning time it will be universal—all over the world.

As we have already seen in Revelation 12, after Christianity cast down the dragon—paganism throughout the Roman Empire—he persecuted the woman—church (v. 13). The dragon became "wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed" (v. 17). As the pagan systems were overthrown and Christianity spread throughout the entire Roman Empire, the devotees of these false systems, seeing their religions crumble, became very wroth; and in order to stop the onward progress of the gospel, they waged bitter persecutions against the Christians, or the church of God. The same will be true in these last days —only at this time all false religions of earth will be united in the opposition.

With the restoration of the pure church of God and Christianity to their primitive glory, they stand opposed not only to the pagan systems, but to every false and corrupt system of apostate Christianity. This includes the Catholic sect, the Eastern sects, and all Protestant sects. As the devotees of all these false systems see their religions crumbling, they will do just what the pagans did throughout the Roman Empire in the beginning: they will unite in a gen-

eral opposition against the pure church of God. The shattered remnants of all these counterfeit religions will unite in confederation.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:13, 14). While the Lord is mustering his hosts upon the high plains of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16) in this beautiful evening light, the spirits of devils will gather together the conquered and defeated factions of all other religions in a general confederation and opposition to the burning truth of God and the true saints who stand in its defense. This is the last great spiritual conflict. The dragon here is Paganism, the beast is Romanism, and the false prophet is Protestantism. All these are to be gathered together by spirits of devils in opposition to the true church of God.

At the same time God is gathering his people out of all the maze of false religions, out of the Protestant sects as well as the Catholic sect.

The church thus gathered out stands in direct opposition to all sect religions and, thank God, his true church has victory over them. This victory of the church in the evening light is seen in the book of symbols as follows: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and they that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Rev. 15:2). Dear reader, "we have reached an awful era in the onward flight of years." The greatest victory the church is ever to win and enjoy is here. She will conquer the nations and "rule them with a rod of iron." This will incur a tremendous opposition from the shattered remnants of all the defeated and fallen religions of earth, just before the end. There will be a confederation of all these in a last attempt to turn back the onward sweeping tide of pure Christianity. Observe that these spirits of devils gather the "whole world." They go up on the entire "breadth of the earth." That is, not only Catholics, Protestants, and the devotees of the various pagan systems, but also Mohammedans and the adherents of all other false systems on earth will be gathered in this final conflict.

It is evident that this will take place just before the end. When Christianity shall have spread over the entire world and every nation on earth shall have been affected by the blessed influence of the gospel; when the church of God shall have arisen in her power and glory, outshone every institution on earth, and become in reality "the light *of the world*"; when every false religion has come under the consuming fire of the word of truth; then, as a last desperate effort, this confederation of all the false and corrupt systems of religion will prepare to crush the church of God. But before they can accomplish their purpose, this world will end with the ushering in of "the great day of God Almighty." This is Christ's coming and the final judgment.

The loosing of the dragon is none other than the revival of the old pagan spirit and religion in these last days. This is fulfilled in the devil-worship called spiritualism, and in several other forms at the present time. Free Masonry is but a form of paganism.

We will here give proofs from the pens and publications of this vast body, who are founded on what they call the "Ancient Mysteries."

Warburton says: "Each of the pagan gods had (beside the public and open) a secret wor-

ship paid unto him, to which none were admitted but those who had been selected by preparatory ceremonies, called initiation. This secret worship was termed 'The Mysteries.' "

"Mackey, another member of this order, says: 'These mysteries existed in every country of heathendom, in each, under a different name, and to some extent under a different form, but always and everywhere with the same design of inculcating [teaching] by allegorical and symbolical teachings the great Masonic doctrines of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. This is an important proposition and the fact which it enunciates [states] must never be lost sight of, in any inquiry into the origin of Free Masonry; for the pagan mysteries were to the spurious Free Masonry of antiquity precisely what the Master's lodges are to Free Masonry of the present day.'

"This is certainly a frank statement, coming as it does from a man who is an acknowledged and highly esteemed authority in matters pertaining to the craft. Daniel Sickles says, 'In Egypt, Greece, and among other ancient nations Free Masonry, that is, the Mysteries, was one of the earliest agencies employed to effect the improvement and enlightenment of man.' Pier-

son says, 'The identity of the Masonic institutions with the Ancient Mysteries is obvious,' which means, clearly to be seen, manifest to any and all.

"Masons say that the order is founded on the Bible—that is unlearned Masons say so. Geo. Wingate Chase, in his Digest of Masonic Law, says 'The Jews, the Turks, each reject either the New Testament, or the Old, or both, and yet we see no good reason why they should not be made Masons. In fact, Blue Lodge [first three degrees] Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible. It is not founded on the Bible. If it was, it would not be Masonry; it would be something else.'

"Sickles says in speaking of the third, or Master Mason's degree, 'There are characters impressed upon it which can not be mistaken. *It is thoroughly Egyptian.*' He further says that 'the ceremony is older by a thousand years than the age of Solomon.' 'That our [Masonic] rites embrace all the possible circumstances of man, moral, social, and spiritual, and have a meaning high as the heavens, broad as the universe, and profound as eternity.'—Sickles in Gen. Chiman Rezon.

"The writer was informed when the charges

were given him 'that our ancient brethren worshiped in high hills and in low vales, and that guards were placed to keep off cowans or eavesdroppers.' By referring to Scripture we at once find the character of those who worshiped on high hills and in low vales, and why they needed a guard to keep off eaves-droppers. 'Thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot' (Jer. 2:20; 3:6). 'Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree' (Deut. 12:2). 'Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the clifts of the rocks. . . . Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice' (Isa. 57:5-7). They were not afraid of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 17:10; 1 Kings 14:23), and they grew and multiplied in their reigns, and in the reigns of all those of whom it is recorded that 'they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.' Some of the kings of Israel and of Judah destroyed their high places for them and were highly favored of God for so doing.

"Again, 'The precepts of Jesus could not

have been made obligatory on a Jew; a Christian would have denied the sanction of the Koran. A Mohammedan must have rejected the law of Moses, and a disciple of Zoroaster would have turned from all to the teaching of his Zend-Avesta. The universal law of nature, which the authors of the old charges have properly called the moral, is, therefore, the *only law* suited in every respect to be adopted as the Masonic code.'—*Mackey's Text-book, 'Masonic Jurisprudence.'*

"If the statements just quoted do not place the secret society of Masonry on a footing decidedly pagan, it is difficult to say just where it does stand. Masons in opening and closing their lodges still look to the east, where the sun rises. Ezek. 8:16—'And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east.'

"Tammuz, or Osiris, of Egypt, who is declared to be the original of Hiram Abiff the temple builder, is still mourned for (Ezek. 8:

14). See Young's Analytical Concordance or any standard Greek Mythology. Now see Pierson's Traditions of Free Masonry. 'The Masonic legend stands by itself, unsupported by history, or other than its own traditions. Yet we readily recognize in Hiram Abiff the Osiris of the Egyptians, the Mithras of the Persians, the Bacchus of the Greeks [god of drunkenness, or feasts, and the like], the Dionysises of the fraternity of Artificers, and the Atys of the Phrygians, whose passions, deaths and resurrections were celebrated by these people respectively.' Thus it is clearly shown that each one of these ancient nations had its counterfeit savior and redeemer, and it is here proved by the words of Masonic Grand Masters, authors, and authorities, that Masonry is of pagan origin."

At the present time there are several millions of devotees of this form of paganism in this Western, or New, World, and also many in the Old World. The spirit of old heathen Rome is reviving everywhere, and today it is uniting Gog and Magog against the saints "and the beloved city" (pure church) (v. 9).

The dragon goes out "to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle."

The original signification of the terms "Gog" and "Magog" is difficult to ascertain, as all known accounts are conflicting. The terms occur in Ezekiel 38 and 39 also. In Revelation 20 these terms are used metaphorically to signify all the enemies of the church of God and opposers of true Christianity.

It is a fact that at this very time, when the Lord, by his Spirit is assembling his hosts for the grand, final, and universal advance against sin, idolatry, and false religions, the devil is already paving the way for the union of all false systems of religion on earth, when Christianity shall have triumphed. The World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 marked an important epoch in this latest shift infernal. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet met in "mutual confidence and respect," a "brotherhood" of religions. Theism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism, the Greek Church, and Protestantism in many forms were all represented; and the delegates of all these religions met, as they said, "to unite all religions against all irreligion; to make the golden rule the basis of this union; and to present to the world *substantial unity of*

many religions." I will here give extracts from addresses made before the Parliament.

President Charles Carroll Bonney said in the opening address: "Worshipers of God and lovers of men: Let us rejoice that we have lived to see this glorious day; . . . that we are permitted to take part in this solemn and majestic event of a World's Congress of Religions. The importance of this event can not be overestimated. Its influence on the future relations of the various races of men, can not be too highly esteemed. If this Congress shall faithfully execute its duties with which it has been charged, it shall become the joy of the whole earth, and stand in human history like a *new Mount Zion*, crowned with glory, and marking the actual beginning of a *new epoch of brotherhood* and peace. *For when the religious faiths of the world recognize each other as brothers, children of one Father*, whom all profess to love and serve, then, and not until then, will the nations of the earth yield to the spirit of concord and learn war no more. . . . We meet on the mountain height of absolute respect for the religious convictions of each other. . . . This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress arises over the world, dispelling the

dark cloud of sectarian strife. *It is the brotherhood of religions.*"

Chairman John Henry Barrows spoke thus in his address: "We are here not as Baptists and Buddhists, Catholics and Confucians, Parsees and Presbyterians, Methodists and Moslems; we are here as members of a Parliament of Religions, over which flies no sectarian flag, . . . but where for the first time in a large council is lifted up the banner of love, fellowship, brotherhood. . . . Welcome, one and all, thrice welcome to the world's first Parliament of Religions! Welcome to the men and women of Israel, the standing miracle of nations and religions! Welcome to the disciples of Prince Siddartha, the many millions who worship their Lord Buddha as the light of Asia! Welcome to the high priests of the national religion of Japan! This city has every reason to be grateful to the enlightened ruler of 'the Sunrise Kingdom.' Welcome to the men of India, and all faiths! Welcome to all the disciples of Christ! . . . It seems to me that the spirits of just and good men hover over this assembly. I believe the spirit of Paul is here. I believe the spirit of the wise and humane Buddha is here, and of Socrates the searcher after truth. . . .

When a few days ago I met for the first time the delegates who have come to us from Japan, and shortly after the delegates who have come to us from India, I felt that the arms of human brotherhood had reached almost around the globe."—*World's Parliament of Religions, Chap. III.*

Since this great Parliament of Religions there have been a number of such gatherings. This is but preparing the way for the last great conflict. I have observed that, no matter how much the sects were quarreling among themselves, whenever we went into their midst with the whole gospel and God's people were gathered out, the sectarians suddenly became friendly toward each other and began to hold union meetings in opposition to the truth. If the corrupt and false religions of earth can never agree on anything else, they will agree, and are agreeing, to oppose the true church of God and the truth advocated by it, which is destined to "consume them to the end." The devil is mustering his hosts—Pagan, Mohammedan, Catholic, and Protestant sects—in one "grand brotherhood of religions," Gog and Magog.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints

about, and the beloved city" (Rev. 20:9). The camp of the saints, the beloved city, is none other than the pure church of God gathered out of all false religions in these last days. Such is the very host that John saw on the sea of glass mingled with fire; and they had victory over all false religions (Rev. 15:2, 3). The hosts of hell, in order to compass the camp of the saints, "went up on the breadth of the earth." This signifies the universality of the church of God, or Christianity. It will be everywhere—all over the world. Therefore all false religions will unite in a confederation that will be universal, and the opposition to the church of God will be universal. In the midst of this final conflict, fire will come down from heaven and destroy them (Rev. 20:9). This ushers in "the great day of God Almighty." "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints . . . in that day" (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

WHEN SHALL THE EARTH BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD?

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). The question to be decided is, In what dispensation is the above prediction by the prophet to reach its fulfilment? It is applied by many teachers to their supposed millennial age; but let us carefully investigate.

Note the fact that it is not righteousness that is to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, but "*the knowledge*" *of the Lord.* A similar prophecy is found in Dan. 12:4, where it is said that in "the time of the end, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." These predictions must certainly refer to the Christian dispensation. Before the coming of Messiah, the true God was only known to one nation—Israel—and they were confined to a limited territory. All the other nations with their teeming millions were at that time without the knowledge of God, rejected, and cast off. Each of the several nations had its own god; For example, Dagon was the god of the Philistines, and Baal the god of the Phœnicians.

These were generally recognized as national gods. Just so, the surrounding nations looked upon Israel. Jehovah was their God. In fact the Israelites themselves generally looked upon Jehovah as the God of their nation alone—a national God—in the same sense as all other nations recognized their deities.

The prophet foretold a day when Jehovah would not be recognized as the God of merely one nation, but would be "King over all the earth"; and when "all dominions shall serve and obey him." The knowledge of the glory of the Lord would not be confined to one people, but the whole earth would be filled with this knowledge. This harmonizes with the announcement at the time of Jesus' birth; "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be *to all people*" (Luke 2:10). Malachi, referring to the same thing, says, "My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering. For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 1:11).

Here we see that the diffusion of light and the knowledge of the Lord among the Gentile nations, which is fulfilled during the Christian era,

is referred to; and that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). In speaking to the ministry in this dispensation, Christ said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Hence the urgent command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This commission to diffuse the knowledge of God in all the world among all nations, is given to the ministry and church in this dispensation. Therefore we are now living in the age when the knowledge of the Lord is to fill all the earth. But this is settled beyond all controversy by the language of Jesus as recorded in Matt. 24:14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." We are now living in what is preeminently the day of salvation for all the world. The dissemination of the knowledge of the true God among all nations upon the inhabitable globe is to be effected through the gospel, and that before the end. By the "end," Jesus clearly referred to his com-

ing and the end of the world, as will be seen by a comparison of Matt. 24: 3, 14.

Before the death of the first apostles, it is plainly stated that the gospel had already sounded "in all the earth" and "was preached to every creature under heaven." Of course, we are to understand this as referring to the then-known civilized world.

The diffusion of the knowledge of the Lord has been progressive throughout the entire Christian era. It first spread to the limits of the Roman Empire, and gradually, like leaven, it has been reaching out to all the nations of the earth. We are now living in a day and time when the entire globe has been circumnavigated. The great waters of the Atlantic and Pacific and Indian Oceans have been crossed and recrossed. The Arctic and Antarctic Oceans have been penetrated by modern sea vessels. Nearly every country on earth and every island of the sea has been explored. Such great nations and countries as China, India, Japan, and Africa are today opening their doors to the gospel, and with outstretched arms are calling for salvation from sin. By the aid of the modern printing-press and our swift means of conveyance, the knowledge of the true God is rap-

idly filling all the earth. Millions of copies of the Bible are being printed and distributed in all parts of the world. Tons of pure gospel literature are being sent everywhere; while a host of self-sacrificing ministers are going forth having "the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred and tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6).

Thus the prophecy of Habakkuk is being fulfilled in the dispensation in which we now live. This being true, why look for another which will never come?

WHAT ABOUT THE HEATHEN?*

Those who believe in Jesus Christ as the only hope of salvation for men are confronted with this stupendous question: "What about the heathen?" This problem, which involves the present condition and the future destiny of hundreds of millions of people who have never heard of Christ, has been the subject of special

*This chapter was written by F. G. Smith.

inquiry, and has also received a variety of answers.

Some earnestly maintain that since this great mass of earth's population, past and present, have never known the gospel of Christ, they are therefore irresponsible and will finally be saved because of their ignorance. Others maintain that voluntary acceptance of Christ on the part of intelligent beings is at all times essential to salvation, and that since the heathen have no such opportunities in this life they must of necessity have a chance of salvation after death, or in an age to come. Many theories of the millennium are strongly intrenched in this position. Others declare that the present dispensation of grace offers the only hope of mercy for fallen men, therefore all who die in sin—whether they ever heard of Christ or not—are forever lost.

In our consideration of this subject of the heathen we should have an earnest and sincere desire to find the truth. It is obvious that in such a discussion mere sentiment is altogether out of place. The human mind naturally shudders and recoils from the frightful spectacle of millions of people plunging without hope into the blackness of darkness forever, but we should

remember that our feelings have nothing to do with the facts one way or the other. If such is to be their doom, our feelings and sentiments to the contrary will avail nothing. This vast host will not be saved in their ignorance simply because *we* should like to have it so; neither will a future age of blessedness—a second probation —open up before them because of our reasonings to the effect that such an opportunity of salvation should be given. Such things as these belong to the counsels and purposes of Almighty God, and if we would know his will, we should approach the secret place of his tabernacle with deepest humility and reverence, and with fear and trembling.

The subject under consideration naturally divides into two sections, under two headings: (1) The present state and condition of the heathen; (2) Their final destiny. This subject, however, is not an independent theme that can be settled by itself, but is simply part of a greater subject that involves the entire race, an understanding of which can only be obtained by a careful examination of the natural constitution of man as a moral being, placed on probation, under the reign of the moral government of God.

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD

The general idea of government is control—control exercised for the purpose of maintaining order. Such control may be effected by direct compulsion, by an understanding of natural consequences, or by the persuasive influence of moral motives. That form of law which reigns in the material creation is compulsion—definite and uniform causes being of necessity followed by uniform results. This is the law of *constraint.* In the realm of animate creation, the sensations of pleasure and pain give rise to a rule of conduct in view of certain foreseen results. Thus the knowledge that violence, intemperance, and licentiousness are sure to react upon the transgressor, exerts a powerful influence in determining conduct. This is the law of *restraint.* But moral law and government is a persuasive influence; "it is a government by laws or rules addressed to the reason, by moral motives which appeal to the conscience, and by moral sanctions which appeal to the emotions." It is a system through which God has revealed his will to man, and *in* man, and taught him what is right and what is wrong; a system under which man is endowed with the power to perceive the

inherent righteousness of God's law and to realize its claims upon him, to feel his duty and responsibility, owing to his power of self-determination and choice; a system under which personal character is formed, with the certain assurance that virtue will receive its reward and sinful character its merited punishment.

Dr. Cocker has drawn the true distinction between the terms "natural" and "moral," in these words: "The terms *natural* and *moral* are employed to denote opposite modes of action and classes of effects. In the one case the mode of action is fixed and uniform, and the effect is necessary; in the other case the mode of action is free and volitional, and the effect is contingent and variable. The first is the order of nature where force reigns, the second is the order of moral life where freedom prevails. . . . That which lies within the agent's power, and to which he determines himself by an act of free choice; and especially that which the agent knows he *ought* to do, and in choosing which he is conscious of power to put forth, in the same unchanged circumstances, a different volition instead, is called *moral.*"

From this definition it will be seen that moral pertains to *persons*, and not to *things*. A pas-

sive, unconscious object in nature possesses no moral quality whatever. But personality is responsible because it is intelligent and free, therefore the acts of personality that result from deliberate choice necessarily possess moral quality. However, all the acts of men are not personal, responsible acts. Sensation is not subject to the will; the action of the heart is not voluntary; perception of objects with which we come in contact is unavoidable; and reflex nervous action is involuntary. A responsible action is one that involves the will, hence we may say that moral acts are such as are intentional.

Another important distinction, drawn by Sewell, in his work on Christian Morals, is that morality is the relation of person to person. "The peculiar distinction of moral actions, moral character, moral principles, moral habits, as contrasted with the intellectual and other parts of man's nature, lies in this, that they always imply a relation between two persons."

The moral government of God, therefore, relates to personality, the relation of person to person—human with human, and the human with the divine. This leads me to the next important point.

THE FOUNDATION OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT

Most of the governments of earth rest on an unnatural basis, for they have been founded by intrigue and bloody conquest, under the assumed proposition that "might makes right." Rights thus obtained are defective and false, and such a foundation must ever be uncertain. But the laws of the divine government do not rest upon such an unnatural and unphilosophical basis; they are not founded in conquest, purchase, or arbitrary power; therefore this government possesses no source of weakness, no elements of wrong, hence it can not possibly fail or become inefficient. It rests upon the solid foundation of *nature*, upon the correlation existing between God and man.

In the Scripture God is sometimes called a *king*, which term belongs to the highest secular authority on earth; his creatures are his subjects, and to them he dispenses wise and just laws, and of them he requires obedience. This comparison fitly describes one aspect of God's relations with men, but it utterly fails to convey the whole truth. The bond between a king and his subjects is a single one—the bond of authority and subjection. This bond is maintained by

arbitrary power. But the relation between God and his intelligent creatures is a natural and necessary one—the relation of a father and his children; "FOR WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING" (Acts 17:28). All earthly forms of authority are accidental and official, created by men for their own purposes, and may be modified or abrogated, but the authority of a father over his child is established by God in *nature.* The kingship of God is a mere *symbol;* but that he is "the Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9) is a divine *reality.* Man was created "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27). This "image" can not refer directly to bodily form, or to the qualities or attributes of matter, for "God is a Spirit"; therefore we conclude that the spirit of man is the only thing capable of bearing any real resemblance to the Almighty. The perfections and attributes of the divine One—omniscience, omnipotence, infinite love, and absolute holiness—are mirrored in the personality of man finitely as *intelligence, will, affection,* and *conscience.* In proportion as these are developed according to their own inherent nature, they reflect the character of God.

This fact of spiritual relationship is so clearly evident that no part of the human race has

ever lacked the consciousness of the divine, and of our absolute dependence on and obligation to this unseen Power. It is only those who do not like "to retain God in their knowledge" that turn from him altogether; it is the fool that says in his heart, "There is no God." But these frantic efforts of men to cut off their relations with God by a sort of moral suicide only impress us more deeply with the fact that we really stand related to a moral Governor of the universe. This conviction inspired the poets of old. Cleanthes, the Greek Stoic philosopher, 300 B. C., wrote:

"Thou art able to enforce obedience from all frail mortals,
Because we are all thine offspring."

And Aratus, a Greek poet, who flourished about 270 B. C., wrote the verse which was quoted in part by Paul in his address to the Athenians:

"Jove's presence fills all space, upholds this ball;
All need his aid, his power sustains us all—
For we his offspring are."

This universal consciousness of relationship with and dependence on the Divine forms the basis of all religion. Man who is the "offspring

of God" knows that God *is*, and can also know to a considerable degree *what* he is. The principle of causality which naturally exists in man points unerringly to the great Creator. A heathen, as well as a philosopher, knows that from nothing, nothing comes, that every effect must have an efficient cause. Reason can not rise out of unreason; activity out of unactivity; consciousness out of unconsciousness; righteousness, love, and justice do not come from nothingness. And this is also the argument of the Scriptures. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear and he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Man's knowledge of what he is convinces him that the First Cause of his existence is not lacking in those qualities which make up his essential nature; in fact, his finite moral personality points to and suggests, with unfailing logic, the existence of an infinite Personality, perfect in intelligence, freedom, power, wisdom, and goodness.

MORAL SUBJECTS

Having observed that the foundation of divine government rests in the paternal relationship that God sustains toward his intelligent creatures, and having also examined briefly the

nature of this administration, we shall now consider the necessary condition of the subjects of such a system of moral jurisdiction. This involves five things: (I) Moral Nature; (II) Moral Relations; (III) Moral Obligations; (IV) Moral Law; (V) Duty.

I Moral Nature.—A moral government can not exist without moral subjects. Government signifies control of something or somebody, therefore moral government implies control of moral beings. But beings must possess a moral nature before they can be the subjects of moral government. Now moral nature implies three things—intelligence, conscience, and freedom of choice.

1. Intelligence.—Intelligence includes self-knowledge—elementary ideas and first truths, which are the foundation of all knowledge—also all knowledge received through the senses. Also all knowledge gained by reason and reflection belongs to the intelligence of moral beings.

2. Conscience.—A moral being must also have the faculty of conscience, for without this there could be no responsibility for moral conduct. There has been some misunderstanding in regard to the exact nature of conscience, there-

fore the definitions of this faculty are various. After considering the matter carefully, the best and simplest definition I am able to give is: *The consciousness of moral distinctions and qualities in human actions—that a standard of right and wrong exists—accompanied by a feeling that we ought to conform to that standard.* Approbation or condemnation is the mere result of this inward conviction and feeling that we *ought* to conduct ourselves in a particular way.

This is substantially the definition of conscience given by Butler: "Conscience is that power of mind which, recognizing the relations, discovers moral quality in actions, and enforces the obligation, producing pleasure upon compliance, and pain upon violation." Dr. Cocker says: "A mere state of the sensibility—a mere feeling of approbation or disapprobation—does not constitute conscience until it is informed by the reason. *Conscience is the unity of feeling and reason in a judgment which has respect to voluntary action.*"

It is this fact; namely, that conscience stands related to the intellect of man, that has produced such a vast amount of confusion in practical life. Conscience is true to itself and never

fails to give a proper decision. Conscience never urged an individual to do what he at the time knew to be wrong. But the knowledge of what is really right and wrong is so dependent upon the relations of the individual that he can easily be mistaken, which will lead conscience to decide for the wrong act. In other words, conscience is dependent for its action upon the light received by the individual, and enforces whatever law is laid upon it. Paul testifies, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9), and this he did with "all good conscience toward God" (chap. 23:1); but he was mistaken in the object of his acts. Paul's sin did not consist in obeying his conscience at that time, but he was responsible because he did not examine the ground of its operation in order that he might understand things in their true light.

3. Freedom of Choice.—An individual might possess intelligence and knowledge, but if he did not have that particular faculty that enables him to discern the moral quality of actions, he could no more do right or wrong than can an animal. And even though he be able to discern moral quality, one thing more is neces-

sary to constitute him a moral being—he must have the power to choose. Without this power his acts are neither good nor bad, for they possess no more moral quality than do the movements of an electric motor or of a water-wheel; he is a mere machine, acting only as he is acted upon. Power of choice is therefore absolutely essential to man's responsibility and moral character. His actions are caused by some one, and the real author of these actions—whether man, God, or the devil—is the responsible party in the case. Therefore, if man is to possess moral character and responsibility, *causality must reside in him.* It does not matter if we are unable to explain fully the true nature of this causality—causal forces in nature also elude our investigations—the facts remain just the same. Either the will of man is inherently free to act in view of different alternatives, or else it is not free. If freedom of action is its heritage from God its author, then man is entirely responsible for his moral conduct; but if the action of the will is conditioned on something outside of itself, then there is no way under heaven to evade the conclusion that diminution of free action is an abatement of responsibility. This point is vital, for with the removal of human

responsibility the whole system of moral government breaks down.

Objections to the doctrine of free will are many, and I feel disposed to give attention to a few of them on account of the supreme importance of this subject in dealing with the matter in hand. The present condition and the eternal destiny, not alone of the heathen, but of all men, is at stake in this one doctrine of the will.

Some tell us that freedom of will is incomprehensible. So, also, all original causality in nature is unknown and, so far as we can see, unknowable. The idea that the will of man is necessitated by some power outside of itself is still more of a mystery, for it denies all our known powers, and contradicts the universal consciousness and practise. All legislation, human and divine, proceeds on the assumption that man is responsible because of an inherent power of choice. This is true in practise, even among those people whose *theology* commits them to the doctrine of fatalism. No difficulties are removed and no light is furnished by denying the freedom of the will.

Others declare that it would be inconsistent for God to invest causality in a creature, there-

by rendering him capable of exerting his will against God, sinning at his own pleasure, and disturbing the order of the universe. But do we not find in nature forces which we can not explain, the utility of which we can not deny? If it was God's will to create such responsible beings, why should we be so greatly concerned about it? For a finite creature to call in question the utility of the divine plans and arrangements, and sit in judgment upon what the divine freedom should allow, is but little short of blasphemy. The stubborn fact is that sin is here, and the moral order of the universe is disturbed. Either the will of man is free and he is therefore responsible for this thing; or else his will is necessitated, he is innocent, and the responsibility rests upon God. Those who hesitate to admit the element of free causality in man lest it should detract from or act in opposition to the divine honor and glory, thus become (though ofttimes unconsciously) the defenders of a system of fatalism which charges all the moral evils of the universe upon a holy God who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). We shall show later that freedom of will on the

part of man is essential to the highest glory of God in his creative works.

It is often urged against the freedom of the will that all the so-called volitions of men are foreknown by the Almighty, therefore they can not be free. In this it is assumed that all the acts of men are marked out in advance and therefore foreknown, and that this fact ever afterward prohibits a current discretionary choice. Some of the greatest errors in theology have originated in this idea of the predestination of human acts, leading to the most ruinous fatalism. The fundamental error in such a view is the failure to distinguish between foreknowledge and causality. *Knowledge is never causality.* We know of an event which occurred last week, but our knowledge did not cause it. The knowledge is altogether dependent on the event, not the event on the knowledge. If the event had been different, our knowledge concerning it would have been different. So also the knowledge of an event which will occur next week, or next year, does not cause it. Its cause may be certain forces operating uniformly in nature, or it may be the choice of a free agent, but in either case knowledge must be as the event. The operating cause, whatever it may be, is what

makes the event certain, and this is the condition of God's foreknowledge concerning it. It is unnecessary for us to attempt an explanation as to how God can foreknow events. He may know the future directly, immediately, but his method is mysterious to us.

Coming to the positive side, we have many proofs in favor of the doctrine of freedom of the will. Man himself is a sort of trinity, composed of intellect, sensibility, and will. In the departments of intellect and sensibility we have certain original, elementary ideas, and we naturally expect to find the same law and original ground of action in the department of the will.

So also the nature of motives imply freedom of choice. Motive is not the cause but a condition of volition. The mind acts upon the motives, choosing between them, but in making such choice is conscious of the ability to put forth under the same circumstances a different volition instead.

Again, the feeling of personal responsibility declares the same freedom of choice. Our distinct feelings of regret or of satisfaction occasioned by past events have no other explanation than the consciousness that we were directly responsible for them and could have made a

different choice. The same thing is true of our present and future acts.

So also the sharp distinction in our consciousness between virtue and vice rests upon this foundation of freedom, for without free choice neither would be possible. The animal, which acts by instinct, without intelligence and conscience, can not possibly have that state of feeling which we have with respect to vice and virtue.

Freedom of the will agrees with the common consciousness of the race. We are aware of our own mental choice, but of nothing back of it. We consider motives, but always with the feeling that choice rests with us and that the mind is itself responsible for this decision. *This is nature, and nature can not lie.* And this personal consciousness of freedom is sustained by universal history and literature, and by all the political and civil institutions of society; for everywhere and at all times they recognize this fundamental truth in human nature.

This doctrine of freedom is also taught throughout the Bible. The entire subject of sin, atonement, and salvation is predicated upon it. The injunctions, threatenings, and promises are at all times and everywhere based upon

this universal law. Voluntary obedience is enjoined, and penalties are inflicted on the ground of voluntary disobedience. The conditions upon which salvation is promised and provided clearly set forth this freedom of the will. The will is the only hindrance: "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12); "and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). All are invited through the will: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37); "*whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). In addition to this we have many positive statements: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: *therefore choose* life" (Deut. 30:19); "*choose you this day* whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15); "they have *chosen their own ways*" (Isa. 66:3); there were freewill offerings unto the Lord under the Mosaic dispensation (Ezra 3:5); and priests and Levites were "minded *of their own freewill* to go up to Jerusalem" (Ezra 7:13).

Thus we find that moral agents must have intelligence, conscience, and will; and since these all reside in man, we have proof positive that

he has a moral nature and is therefore a proper subject of moral government.

II Moral Relations.—The term "moral government" implies a certain relationship which moral beings sustain to each other. If a being were so situated that he sustained no relations whatever with any other being, he would be under no obligation. Moral relations imply that beings are so situated that they affect or can affect one another, and the moral government of God assumes such relations of men with men and of men with God.

III Moral Obligations.—Obligation is a natural law, or impulse, of our being. We immediately recognize and feel the claims of others upon us, and we feel that we must respond. The ground of this obligation is not self-interest, although some able writers have contended for this view. We can not accept the idea that the standard of morality is universal selfishness. The crying of a child or the unfortunate condition of a helpless invalid makes a claim upon us, and immediately we feel an impulse to act, when it is certain that no selfish interests are involved. Nor is obligation founded on principles of general utility, arbitrary commands,

or the mere happiness of beings; it rests in the nature of man's being and the relation which he sustains to God and to his creatures. The reason why the child should love and obey his parents is not because of self-interests, arbitrary commands, or a desire for the general welfare of the community, but *because of the relationship which he sustains to his parents.* All other considerations are secondary. Now God has created man with a moral nature, therefore man feels bound to do just what God and his own true nature requires, and what his relations with God and with men demand. In other words, we are to love God "*because of what God is, and what we are.*"

IV **Moral Laws.**—Law is a method of force, and, as we have already noticed, moral law is a persuasive influence, an authoritative direction, addressed to our moral nature in such a manner that it receives the approbation of our conscience. *It is a rule of conduct.* Now a rule of conduct is given by one to whom obligation is due, and the authority of this rule is dependent on the nature and extent of the obligation. Governments command us, and we feel that we should obey; parents supply a rule of conduct, and we feel it our duty to comply therewith; but

God gives us the supreme law. And this brings us to the next point.

V **Duty.**—Duty is obedience to the law, compliance with the laws of being. There is a difference between obligation and duty, for obligation, as we have seen, rests in the nature of things, whereas duty is that obedience which we owe to the law.

DIVINE GOVERNMENT UNIVERSAL

Now as all men are moral beings, the claims of divine government are universal; and here we come to that phase of the subject which directly involves the heathen. There never has been a time when any nation of the earth has been outside of the realm of divine government. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, *and they that dwell therein*" (Psa. 24:1). "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and *his kingdom ruleth over all*" (Psa. 103:19). The idea that some of God's intelligent creatures in the past, as well as some in the darkest corners of the earth at present, are not under law and have no obligation to worship God, is at variance with sound reason as well as contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God on the subject. Let us

apply to the heathen the five principles we have already considered as essential to a subject of the divine government, and thus determine their present state and condition.

First of all, we shall observe that the heathen, as well as all other men in all ages, are conscious that they are *moral beings*. They possess *intelligence*, *conscience*, and *will*, which three things are essential to a moral nature.

Second, They are conscious of the fact that they sustain *moral relations* to each other and to God. They have never lost sight of the fact that there is a moral Governor of the universe and that they are responsible to him. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; *so that they are without excuse*" (Rom. 1:20). So clear is the nature of this relationship with God that they look up to the Divine with the feeling that they are "his offspring."

Third, The inward conviction of this relationship is the ground of those *moral obligations* that are everywhere manifested in the disposition to reverence and worship God. Man simply feels that he *must* do this. A greater and more

convincing proof of obligation could not be given.

Fourth, But are the heathen under *moral law?* We answer unhesitatingly, Yes. Moral law, as we have seen, is a rule of conduct given by the one to whom obligation is due. But moral law is the law of being—it exists in the nature of things and is therefore revealed subjectively in the human consciousness. No human legislation, and no divine objective revelation, was necessary to make clear the greater laws of being. (Objective revelation has for its specific purpose the unfolding of a plan of redemption.) In all ages and in every dark corner of the earth there has been a clear distinction in the human consciousness between justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, love and cruelty. Even the lowest savages (whatever their *practise* may be) regard stealing, adultery, murder, and other sinful acts, as crimes and worthy of punishment. Livingstone, the explorer, states that "on questioning intelligent men among the Backwains as to their former knowledge of good and evil, of God, and of a future state, they have scouted the idea of any of them ever having been without a tolerably clear conception on all these subjects. Respecting their sense

of right and wrong, they profess that nothing we indicate as sin ever appeared to them otherwise, except the statement that it was wrong to have more wives than one."

As Sophocles has said:

"The unwritten laws of God that know not change;
They are not of today nor yesterday,
But live forever."

The testimony of Cicero, a pagan, proves conclusively the universality of the divine government—that all men are moral beings, placed under moral law. Says he: "There is one true and original law, conformable to nature and reason, diffused over all, invariable, eternal, which calls to the fulfilment of duty and to abstinence from injustice, and which calls with that irresistible voice which is felt in all its authority wherever it is heard. This law can not be controlled or abolished, nor affected in its sanctions by any law of man. A whole senate, a whole people, can not dispense with its paramount obligation. It requires no commentator to render it distinctly intelligible, nor is it different at Rome, at Athens, now and in ages before and after, but in all ages and in all nations it is and has been and will be one and everlasting—one as that God, its author and

promulgator, who is the common Sovereign of all mankind, is himself one. Man is truly man as he yields himself to this divine influence. He can not resist it but by flying, as it were, from his own bosom, and laying aside the general feelings of humanity."

But we also have the testimony of divine revelation on this subject. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law [the written law] do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:14, 15). No clearer statement of subjective moral laws, connected with a moral nature, could be given.

Fifth, Duty.—The fact of moral law necessitates duty. The universal consciousness of sin proves that the heathen understand their duty and do it not. They do not understand all that we who are blessed with an additional revelation understand, but while they do not have this objective law it is not their duty to fulfil it. *Their* duty pertains to obedience to that law which they already have. The apostle Paul, after declaring that through nature "the eternal power

and Godhead" is known to the heathen, "so that they are without excuse," proceeds to say: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God"; and "even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:20, 21, 28).

The grand argument of Paul in the Roman letter is to prove that all men are sinners, in order that he may set forth Christ as the universal Savior and the world's only hope. The texts already cited show that the Gentiles, or heathen, were sinners because of their disobeying the unwritten laws of their own nature. He then accuses the Jews of breaking their written law, in order to fix the charge of sin upon them also. His conclusion is found in these words: "We have before proved *both Jews and Gentiles*, THAT THEY ARE ALL UNDER SIN." "FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, *and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:9, 23).

We have now shown, by reason and by Scripture, that the heathen possess moral responsibility, that they know their duty and do it not, therefore they are sinners. But there are some other important considerations to which we must give attention before we pass final judg-

ment upon the state and condition of the heathen world.

PURPOSE OF MORAL GOVERNMENT

The object of moral government is to place finite, intelligent creatures on probation, where opportunity can be had for the formation of moral character. Moral character can not be made by creative effort; it must be developed by the individual himself. Some one has said that "a man can no more become virtuous without the discipline of the will than he can become intelligent without the discipline of the understanding." The experience of Eden proves that character-forming is wholly in the power of the individual, and it also proves that men are not safe without such discipline.

Some people are so rash as to criticize God's method of government. They want to know why God does not or can not by an act of his almighty power banish sin and the possibility of sin from his universe. Such persons do not know what they are saying. The only way God, by an act of power, could prevent man from sinning, would be to reconstruct him so that he would be without any moral sense of right or wrong, or rob him of all freedom of action so

that he would no longer be a rational being. God has already created many creatures which are utterly incapable of sinning. Would man be willing to exchange places with the snails and the crocodiles? But God's nature is such that he loves moral character, he delights in that which has affinity with himself, therefore he created man "in his own image, after his likeness." The capacity to know, to love, to enjoy, and to freely choose that which is right, is what pleases God, and it is this kind of service—an intelligent, willing service—that reflects the highest honor and glory in all the creation of God.

So, then, the moral government of God is a probationary economy in view of a future life. All men are being subjected to the trials, changes, and experiences of this life in order to test their principles and form their settled character. Therefore the possibility of disobedience and sin inheres in the nature of all finite moral beings.

There is one feature of this probation which is comforting to us in view of the moral condition of the world, and that is the knowledge that God is just and will treat all men equitably. Ability is the measure of responsibility. "Where

no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). Christ recognized this principle in the divine government—"If I had not come and spoken unto them, *they had not had sin:* but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15:22). Not that the Jews were without guilt of any kind before this time, but with respect to the light which Christ brought they had no previous obligation, hence no transgression. Again Christ said, "That servant which *knew* his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes. But he that *knew not*, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes" (Luke 12:47, 48).

The light which we have received rates our responsibility. "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13). "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). While Paul admits that much of the "ignorance" of the heathen God "winked at," or overlooked, he does not admit that they are free from all responsibility and guilt, for he argues that they knowingly violated the principles of right revealed in their own consciousness, when they gave themselves up to all manner of wicked-

ness; that their civil laws stand as a proof that they understood the character of their crimes in that they themselves adjudged those who committed such things as "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32). We expect more of a man than we do of a child, and God expects more of a civilized man—blessed with golden opportunities and privileges—than he does of the poor savages of the earth. But greater light, if rejected, will bring greater condemnation. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. 11:21-24).

As there are degrees of light and responsibility, so also there will be degrees of punishment. In the last great day rewards and pun-

ishments will be meted out "according to our works." It will be "more tolerable" for some than for others; some will receive "greater damnation."

Our heavenly Father understandeth all of the complicated relations of life, all about our advantages and disadvantages. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14). "The Lord is good unto all; and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psa. 145:9). And as he understands all about our light and ability, he knows how to fix the exact measure of our responsibility; therefore, we may rest assured that in the settling of all accounts 'the Judge of all the earth will do right.'

ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION

The atonement of Christ and the fulfilment of his redemptive plan also concerns the present and the future state of the heathen. But here also we must observe that the subject of the heathen is only one phase of that greater subject wherein atonement and redemption have their application to all men.

As we have already shown, the apostle Paul charged responsible sin upon the whole world,

and thus prepared the way in his Roman letter for the doctrine of the universality of Christ's atonement and redemptive work. In the fifth chapter the apostle exhibits a parallel between Adam and Christ, which he consistently maintains both by similarity and by contrast. Adam is presented as the federal head of the natural creation; Christ is the head of a new and spiritual creation. Adam was the one by whom sin was introduced; Christ is the one by whom sin is conquered and destroyed. Adam was disobedient; Christ is obedient. Through Adam judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; through Christ the free gift came for all men unto "justification of life." By Adam came death; through Christ "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall *reign in life*."

Paul did not believe in a limited atonement. It remained for later theologians to argue that the atonement is applicable to only a certain select few. But the atonement of Christ is not exhausted by use. When a number have been saved, it is still just as efficacious to save others. If it is able to save any one, it is able to save every one. Universalists argue that since Christ's atonement was for all, therefore

all men will be finally saved, irrespective of conditions to be performed in this life. In reaching this conclusion, however, they make the serious error of confounding atonement and redemption. The atonement was for all, and unconditional; but redemption signifies the work of God performed by Christ as a result of the atonement, and is, as we shall see, conditional.

In this fifth chapter of Romans the doctrine of Paul is that Christ in his atonement counteracts the direct effects of Adam's sin; that *just as* all men are disposed to sin, through Adam's fall, *to that extent* the atonement freely applies to all men. In other words, just as Adam sold the race under sin, Christ in his atonement has ransomed the entire race, and claims it for his own. But we must not misconstrue the apostle's words in this chapter, as do Universalists, and give them a meaning which is out of harmony with the remainder of his teaching in this same epistle; for according to Paul, all the world has become guilty through personal sin, hence merits God's judgment and punishment; therefore the only hope of final salvation is by a personal acceptance of and belief in Jesus.

This brings us again to the doctrines of the freedom of the will and of personal responsi-

bility. Granting, without discussion, the well-established fact of inherent sin, or native depravity, I wish to say that the sins for which men are personally responsible *are their own sins.* Children do not plunge into the depths of depravity on reaching the age of moral responsibility simply because *they must sin.* If the child at this age is impelled by some force over which he has no control, his acts possess no more moral quality than do the revolutions of a carriage wheel. *To accept such an idea of force is to deny all personal sin and responsibility.* Such an idea is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and to the common consciousness of our race. I assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that there is no sin in the entire catalog of sin that the child at this period *must* commit. If you ask me, then, to account for the universality of sin, I reply that the inclinations and promptings of the evil nature within, in conjunction with the temptations and examples of wrong-doing without, constantly present such powerful motives that (as the past history of men clearly shows) the individual of his own will finally chooses to do something that he at the time knows to be wrong, feels that he should not do, and is con-

scious that he is not compelled to do. And this thought, that he yielded to something that he was not obliged to yield to, is what occasions the feelings of responsibility and guilt. But *no person ever descended into the depths of sin without first experiencing a struggle with his moral nature and conscience.*

A simple illustration, although not entirely parallel, may serve to make clearer the reason why men commit sin when they are not positively compelled to do so. We will suppose that one hundred hungry men are about to be ushered into a dining-room where an abundance of food is waiting. We must admit that each one has the power of refusing to partake of this food; but when we consider the powerful appeals of *nature* within, and the favorable circumstances from without, prompting them to yield to this inclination, we feel safe in predicting that every one of the number will *choose* to eat.

To place the matter differently: The general uniformity of men as to their corporeal natures, dispositions, and habits, tend toward uniformities of volition. This result Dr. Whedon has explained by the Doctrine of Probability, according to which uncertain or variable in-

dividual acts become in the aggregate reliably *certain;* that is, distributive or individual freedom resolves itself into collective necessity, so that what is true of specific individual acts is collectively untrue. The player at dice may at the first throw turn up a six. That this should occur twice in succession is improbable, but not altogether impossible. But there is still greater improbability of its occurring three times in succession; and so on in diminishing degrees. While there is exactly the same probability in each individual instance, yet, taken collectively, it becomes so exceedingly improbable that the same result should always occur that it amounts to a practical certainty that it *can not* occur. So also we may say that when men are constantly exposed to powerful temptations from which they have no protection, the probability that they will always resist the wrong becomes so exceedingly remote that it amounts to a practical *certainty* that they will not through their entire lifetime live without making a single wrong choice and thus committing sin.

When men choose to do the acts of sin they form sinful habits, and these habits may in time utterly enslave them, but even in this case their will is not enslaved. *A man can will any-*

thing, but where he may fail is in the power to accomplish what he knows he ought to do. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are *accustomed* to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). Men may will or desire "to do good," but when they are "accustomed to," or in the habit of, doing evil, they lack the power to effect the change. In Romans 7, Paul describes his law experience in which his desires for good were brought in conflict with the law of sin that was in his members, and he says, "TO WILL is present with me; but *how to perform* that which is good I find not" (v. 18). The fact that every offer of salvation is addressed to the will proves that, so long as reason itself remains, sin never robs an individual of the ability to choose.

The writer once had an experience with a person who was possessed with devils, which illustrates this point. When this individual was admonished to prepare for heaven, her face would gather blackness and an almost indescribable look of anguish and pain would seize upon her at the very thought of going to heaven. She declared she did not want to go there. When we attempted to warn her of the terrible dangers and punishments of hell, her

face would light up with joy, and clapping her hands in glee she would say, "Oh, good! good! I will soon be in hell, where all the devils are." But when the true ministers of Christ rebuked the devils in the name of the Lord Jesus, and cast them out, the lady was restored to her right mind, and stated that at the very time when the devils were talking through her, and declaring that she wanted to go to hell, *in her own mind and thoughts* she was anxiously desiring deliverance and praying God to enable us to cast the devils out. She still had *will*, but was unable to help herself. Now people would not be responsible for such a helpless condition if it were not for the fact that they are responsible for the first acts of sin which lead on to the formation of those habits and conditions wherein they are helpless. And here is where the "*power* of God unto salvation" is manifested in the gospel. Our Lord breaks the power of sinful habits and sets people free. Praise his name!

In his treatment of the atonement Paul represents Christ as a universal Savior—"who is the *Savior of all men*, SPECIALLY OF THOSE THAT BELIEVE" (1 Tim. 4:10). Christ has ransomed the whole race unconditionally to the same extent that sin has af-

fected the whole race unconditionally. But when men reach the age of moral responsibility and take upon themselves a sinful life, they are responsible for their own acts, and in so doing they take themselves out from under these unconditional benefits of the atonement. The entire race naturally belongs to God, both by creative and by redemptive right; but under a system of moral government designed to present a probationary economy for the formation of moral character, the will of man is free to act, if it so chooses, even in opposition to the will of God. However, as has been said, "alternative power is a talent loaned out by God to man. But it is a talent which still belongs to God, for the proper or improper use of which man is accountable." We can not accept that old idea propounded by Gregory of Nyssa, that the atonement was a ranson price paid to Satan for the release of his subjects. We fail to see where Satan has any real rights in the case. His subjects are all rebels against the government of God, and they must either return to their allegiance voluntarily or be brought to account by the great Judge because of their sins. Those who return of their own volition, believing in Jesus Christ, receive his "special" salvation.

The parable of the Prodigal Son illustrates this point. This wanderer was just as much the son of his father when he was away in the far country as he was when he was at home, but with this difference in results: That in voluntarily departing from home he forfeited the rights and privileges of sonship, and he would have perished miserably in that condition if he had not come to himself and made the wise decision, "I WILL arise, and go to my father." When he returned home, his father accorded him special favors. The fact of sonship was on his part unconditional, while possession of the rights and privileges of sonship were altogether conditional.

Since the atonement of Christ embraces all who have descended from Adam, all infants belong to Christ unconditionally—"*of such is the kingdom of heaven*"; but when they voluntarily depart from the right way, they forfeit these unconditional benefits and are in all legal respects "dead" to God; but when any individual voluntarily returns to God, believing in his name, Christ becomes to him a "special" Savior, saying, "This my son *was dead*, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:24).

Atonement, then, was performed by Christ

and is unconditional; redemption also centers in Christ, but, to the extent that the will of moral beings is involved in transgressing, is conditional. But Enoch, Noah, and a host of Old Testament saints and patriarchs had no knowledge of the historic Christ, and still we expect to see them in heaven because of the merits of that universal atonement, which, in their day, was yet to come. And if from motives of love, reverence, and obedience to that God whom he seeks and feels after, a heathen should decide with all his heart to turn from those things which *he knows* to be wrong, we can at least indulge the hope that, after all, he will be finally saved, as well as those Old Testament characters and myriads of infants who passed out of life without a personal knowledge of the historic Christ. "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35). However, judging from what we know of actual conditions among the heathen, we must admit that the probability of their salvation by this means is very limited indeed; so that we are safe in asserting that the hope of the heathen world lies in our imparting to them the gospel of Jesus Christ, that

they may really *know* the way of salvation and believe on his name to life everlasting.

PROPHECIES AND PROMISES

There are a number of prophecies and promises in the Bible which appear to have a strong bearing on the subject of the heathen, and these are frequently urged in support of the idea that if the heathen are not evangelized in this life an opportunity of salvation is to be afforded them in an age to come. Lack of space prohibits an extensive examination of all the prophecies thus applied and interpreted, therefore I shall simply call attention to the strongest one bearing on the subject: the promise to Abraham—"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). The Abrahamic covenant is given in the following chapters of Genesis: 12:1-3; 13:14, 15; 15:5, 18; 17:1-8; 22:18. On examination of these scriptures we find that the subject bifurcates, two great divisions being manifest. The first section relates to Abraham and his literal descendants—"I will multiply thee exceedingly"; "I will make of thee a great nation." And connected with this, stands the

promise of their literal inheritance of the land of Canaan—"Unto thy seed have I given this land." The second division is of world-wide importance—"I will make thee a father of many nations"; "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"; "and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The first section of this covenant, pertaining to Abraham's literal descendants, does not concern us in this place, but we are interested in the second division. Where and when does it meet its fulfilment—under the gospel, during the gospel dispensation, or in some age to come? We will let the Word of God answer. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would *justify the heathen through faith*, preached before *the gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). This text shows the manner of fulfilment of that promise to Abraham, that through the actual preaching of the gospel to the heathen, justification by faith results; which proves conclusively that its fulfilment is altogether conditional. Therefore every attempt to give this prediction an unlimited and unconditional application is false.

The time when this promise was to reach its

fulfilment is also given by inspiration. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. . . . Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations)" (Rom. 4:13-17).

The law age did not witness the fulfilment of this promise, for it was to be of faith, that it might apply to all those who are of the faith of Abraham; for "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, *which is* CHRIST." "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*" (Gal. 3:16). "*If* ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs *according to the promise*" (Gal. 3:29).

The "seed" of Abraham, though referring specifically to "Christ," is in reality two-fold, and the "blessing" of Abraham on the nations also comes from this two-fold source. Through

the literal seed of Abraham all divine revelation has been given to the world; and to his spiritual seed—"Christ"—and thus to the church—the gospel light and salvation has been given for promulgation among all nations. Many scriptures clearly indicate that Messiah's kingdom in the gospel dispensation shall spread throughout the whole earth, and thus fulfil this promise to Abraham in its completest sense. "His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9: 10). "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14). The little stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, representing the kingdom of Christ in this dispensation, shall yet "become a great mountain, and *fill the whole earth*" (Dan. 2: 35). Not that all men will be saved, for salvation is conditional, but "the *knowledge* of the glory of the Lord" shall be universal. For "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached *in all the world* for a witness unto ALL NATIONS; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24: 14). So, then, the promise that in the seed of Abraham "all nations" should be blessed reaches its fulfilment under the gospel, *before the end of time.*

NO PROBATION AFTER DEATH

The general teaching of the Scriptures is to the effect that probation ends at death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "That every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye can not come" (John 8:21). "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death" (Prov. 14:32). "When he dieth [the wicked man] . . . he shall go to the generation of his fathers; *they shall never see light*" (Psa. 49:17-19). The account of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16) is proof positive that there is no hope of change after death. "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you can not; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." The question of the future was settled then. The special concern of the rich man for his five brethren on earth proves that there would be no hope for them either after their death; and,

furthermore, the answer—"they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them," and "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead"—implies that in life all that was necessary in their case was being done.

We have already clearly shown that all men are now on probation, since they are moral beings placed under moral law; and since every man's responsibility is rated according to his understanding of the claims of moral law and his ability to comply therewith, there is no call for a new or second probation. Every man's character is definitely formed on this basis in this present lifetime, hence there could be no second probation without breaking down the character already formed and beginning over again.

The apostle Paul settles this matter definitely in the same chapter where he shows conclusively the fact that the responsibility of the heathen is fixed by the moral law which is written in their hearts. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds . . . tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, *and also of the Gentile;* but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and *also to the Gentile:*

for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. . . . For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:6-16). There is no hope of a future probation for the heathen. They know *their duty*, as respects that law which they already have, and transgress voluntarily; and according to Paul, it is the doctrine of the gospel that Jesus Christ shall be the judge of all men—judging those who have sinned in the law, "by the law"; those who have sinned without law, "without law"; that is, by the unwritten law in their own hearts: while those who have had the gospel standard are held responsible according to its requirements. This method of judgment is just. However, the standard of judgment for all is, in reality, the same law—the moral law; that law which stands out prominently in the

New Testament—but its application differs, being graduated on the scale of every man's available light.

In conclusion, I will notice one question that is frequently asked: "How can God be just in permitting millions who have never heard of Christ to go down to everlasting ruin, while he saves others?" This question does not even touch the facts. The mystery is not how God can be just and permit some to be lost without knowledge; the mystery of the gospel—the greatest mystery of all the ages—is how God can be just and *save anybody*, with or without knowledge. Justice naturally requires the execution of penalty upon wrongdoers, hence salvation is no part of justice: it is altogether the work of mercy. The mystery of the atonement lies in the fact that in some marvelous manner the divine principle of justice is maintained and upheld while mercy and pardon is offered to guilty men. To confuse justice and mercy in our conception is a serious mistake, for it naturally leads to the erroneous idea that in sentencing men to destruction God is in some way loading upon them more than they deserve, and that to prevent this injustice, offers of mercy are absolutely necessary. The chief executive

of a state or nation is under no legal obligation to dispense pardons to criminals; he is rather under obligation to see that justice is enforced. And so far as we can see, God was under no direct obligation to provide salvation for anybody. We may say that his love required this, but there is manifestly a difference between the persuasions and promptings of love and the legal demands of moral government. The moral order of the universe, the foundation and stability of the government of God itself, demands the operation of justice, therefore in sentencing all men to their just deserts —to a punishment graduated on the scale of their available light—there is positively no element of injustice.

When we carefully consider these thoughts, we can see that even if God purposed to offer salvation simply to a select few of the human race, this choice would not be an act of injustice to the others, for it would in no sense make them worse than they would have been had he refused to make such offers to anybody. Understand, I am not teaching that God purposed to exclude anybody from his favors: I am seeking to exhibit justice in its true light. In such a case, however, we might feel that the

Almighty manifested partiality toward his creatures. However, "with God there is no respect of persons." Christ "tasted death for every man"; and it is not his will that any should "perish, but that all should come to repentance." Therefore, although some men are saved, while others are lost—with or without knowledge of a salvation plan—God stands acquitted of all injustice; and so far as partiality is concerned, the divine plan of mercy and salvation is provided for all, and there can be no reflection on the divine character in this respect. Whatever responsibility exists for unnecessary loss in the heathen world, it attaches itself to the church because of its failure to stand uncorrupted during the ages, and to extend its peaceful triumphs over all the nations under the shining sun.

WILL THERE BE ANOTHER CHANCE?

To this question some modern teachers answer yes, while the Bible positively answers *no.* The gospel of Jesus Christ offers the last hope of mercy to Adam's fallen race; for when "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all

the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come." This is true for a number of reasons:

First, We are now living in the last dispensation and age of time. This we have abundantly proved in previous chapters. With the closing of time, all opportunities of salvation will have forever passed.

Second, Now is the day of salvation. In Isa. 49:8 we read of "an acceptable time," a special "day of salvation," the most propitious age of God's grace to mankind. Paul, after quoting this text, clearly applies it, saying, "Behold NOW is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:1, 2). That there will be another day of salvation future is utterly refuted. Hear this, ye who now presume upon God's mercy with a vain hope of being saved in an age to come, *now* is the accepted time; yes, NOW. O sinner, "*now*" is the day of salvation. In view of this fact, how weighty the injunction of the Almighty through the prophet—"Seek the Lord while he may be found." This is not an idle dream or something to be trifled with, for it is the Holy Ghost that saith "TODAY if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:7; Heb. 4:7).

Third, The provisions for salvation are now complete, and these provisions are universal in their application. Through Christ's death on the cross a present, perfect salvation was purchased for the whole world. He "tasted death for every man." He was "raised again for our justification." Thus as a savior and redeemer of mankind, he was "vested with all power in heaven and in earth"; power to save, sanctify, and preserve unto his heavenly kingdom, all those who will believe on his name. After his ascension, he sent the Holy Spirit to convict men of sin, to quicken them to life, and to sanctify; and thus execute the perfect salvation he had purchased upon the cross. On a mediatorial throne at the right hand of his Father, "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." Yes, the provision for man's salvation is complete. Deliverance from all sin is now obtainable through the abundant grace of God. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this *present* world" (Tit. 2:11, 12). Here again we are

reminded that now is the time of full salvation. It is not in some future time, but "*now* being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). It was in this dispensation that the blood was shed which "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18). And "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous" (1 John 3:7). This happy state, we are glad to tell you, can be enjoyed throughout all our days on earth; for God has promised to "grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). This is a life free from committing sin. For "we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18). "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" (1 John 3:6). While it is true that this is a world of sin in which we are surrounded by evils of all kinds, yet "the Lord is faithful who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (2 Thess. 3:3). Yes,

dear reader, he "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Paul says, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8). God could do no more for mankind in a future age than he has provided for and promises to do in this dispensation of grace. Since salvation in all its fulness is now attainable, it follows that no other chance will be given.

Fourth, In the last grand commission Christ gave to his ministry, he commanded them: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; "Go . . . teach all nations." He also said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And this gospel "is the power of God unto salvation *to every one* that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). But "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). And when "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:15). This is positive proof that

the gospel now offers the last opportunities of salvation to a lost world.

Fifth, The door of the kingdom is now open. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. 3:8). The present invitations of the gospel are universal. In Matt. 11:28 Jesus says to all the sin-laden of mankind, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." The prophet Isaiah speaks thus of God's invitation to the world during the Christian era; "Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all ye ends of the earth*"; "Ho, *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money." "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And the promise is, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." No opportunity of salvation will be offered to Adam's race beyond the present gospel of Christ.

Sixth, How can men expect to escape the wrath of God who presume upon such mercies and reject such offers? Yea, "*how shall we escape,* if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). To this there is but one answer: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the

Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; *and they shall not escape*" (1 Thess. 5:2, 3). "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18).

Seventh, God "*now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). And to this command we may couple the solemn warning, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Eighth, In the present gospel of Christ the church and world are given the most solemn warnings of impending judgment, which will fall upon the world of the ungodly in the last great day; and all are urged to be ready for this great event. The coming of Christ is a great and solemn event pending, for which the church is to look and watch, and for which it is to be ready. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42). "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:4-6). "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an

hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). The revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven will be a day of wrath, when God "shall render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:5, 6). The inhabitants of the world are now warned to "flee the wrath to come." Peter tells us of that awful day of fire; the great *day of the Lord*, when this earth and all the works in it shall be burned up; which he tells us will be "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." In view of all this, hear his solemn warning: "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:11, 12). "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (v. 14). Holiness of heart and life is urged upon the church as the necessary preparation to be ready to stand before the Son of Man.

Ninth, The current age will end with the coming of Christ, at which time "the Lord Jesus himself shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking ven-

geance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). But why multiply texts of Scripture? Such are the solemn warnings of the gospel to men who would dare to neglect the salvation of their souls. "Now," "today," is held out by the hand of Infinite Mercy as the last offer of salvation. Salvation can be obtained only on this side of the coming of the Lord. Christ now reigns upon a mediatorial throne; and the instant he leaves that throne, the world will be without an advocate, without a Savior, without further chance of salvation. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and *hath shut to the door*, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are. . . . Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:25-28).

THE FUTURE KINGDOM OF GLORY

Jesus in speaking of the signs that were to take place before his second coming, said, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31). In 2 Tim. 4:1 it is said that Christ "shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

There is no question, that these texts have clear reference to the future; but we deny that they teach Christ's kingdom and reign here on the earth as yet future. The promise that we shall some day enter the kingdom of glory above, is given to those, who here on earth, enter the kingdom of grace. Paul said it is through much tribulation we "shall enter the kingdom of God."

Christ will come with power and great glory, accompanied by tens of thousands of his holy angels. It is said that then "he shall sit on the throne of his glory" and at that time every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to God. This triumphant climax of Christ's great reign can properly be termed the appearing of his kingdom. It is no doubt with reference to this very thing that Paul said "he shall judge the quick and the dead at his ap-

pearing and kingdom." But heaven itself, with all the glories it contains, which will be the future abode of the redeemed, is properly termed the "everlasting kingdom of God." It is the eternal kingdom of glory, the happy state of the redeemed in the great hereafter. Speaking with direct reference to this future state, Peter says, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). No doubt Jesus referred to this blessed future state when he spoke of "that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). To the saints on earth, this encouraging promise is given: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Instead of teaching a future literal kingdom to be set up in this world, all these texts teach the glories of that future kingdom above, the state of the blessed in heaven itself, which will be our future and eternal home. In that world "they shall see his face; and his name shall be

in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and *they shall reign for ever and ever*" (Rev. 22:5).

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